Regional Identity and Constructive Regionalization in the North Caucasus: Group Perceptions and Nuances from Inside the Region

By

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Abstract

The North Caucasus region of Russia is certainly one of the world's most ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse. The region's landscapes reflect legacies of Russian imperialism and Soviet rule, along with contemporary Russian federal administration. The North Caucasus also constitutes a zone of religious transition between Christianity and Islam. These qualities, all of which may potentially serve as markers of identity among the region's local population, have long constituted a challenge for ethnic Russian, and/or Russian state dominance, and thus have promoted state-led efforts and policies (namely "ethno-federalism" and "federal district reform") that attempt to achieve a cohesive sense of regional identity for the North Caucasus. This dissertation examines empirical understandings and perceptions of regional and territorial identity as expressed through the collective experiences, attitudes, and opinions of young adults in the contemporary North Caucasus. The project aims to investigate how "the region" ranks among other identity markers of North Caucasus's many ethno-national and socio-cultural groups, recognize how residents of the region understand it in terms of territorial composition and meaning, and discern any nuances among the population regarding the use of regional policy by the Russian state so as to influence perceptions and discourses on identity, security, and economic development (efforts which I term "constructive regionalization"). The research methodology includes analysis of survey data, as well as a GIS-based cognitive mapping exercise, to indicate statistically significant differences of opinion on the importance of identity markers and their territorial salience. These differences are explained via qualitative interview data gained directly from participants in the field.

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Chapter I: Introduction, Background, and Project Goals

The concepts of "the region" and regional identity have traditionally played an important role in geography (Paasi, 2003). Although emphasis on meanings, origins, uses, and applicability of "the region" as a concept have changed over time, regional issues continue to be relevant for geographers in many subsets of the discipline. For example, issues of regionalism and separatism are of interest to political geographers, who study identities and how populations divide themselves (Agnew et al., 2003). Concepts like "new regionalism" and "re-scaling" appear in the work of economic geographers, who are interested in the impact of global capitalism on development (Harvey, 2005). For cultural geographers, who are interested in peoples and their attachments to place and the landscape (Anderson et al., 2003), regional narratives and designations can represent voices of defiance and cultural distinctiveness. A prominent political geographer, Ansi Paasi (2009), has called for more research on markers of regional identity, how regional distinctions and classifications are produced and reproduced, how they express relations of power, how regional identities are manifested, and the purposes of articulating regional identities.

In this project, I approach the topic of regional identity by applying theory from multiple sub-fields of geography specifically to the case of the North Caucasus region in the Russian Federation where definitions of "the region" are utilized by the state to address issues of governance and development and to promote geopolitical agendas. Through field work and analysis of empirical data, I will examine how people perceive the importance of various identity markers in regional context, testing whether or not associations with "the region" (the North Caucasus) can serve as a marker of identity in comparison to other place-based and socio-cultural identity markers. I aim to address the prospective value of emphasizing "the region" as

a marker of identity in cultural and political geography, as it has the potential to work for or against state goals (Paasi, 2003). I will address the role of the region as it functions within the greater meta-geography (Lewis and Wigen, 1997; Paasi, 2002; Murphy, 2008) of the state, and measure cognitive perceptions of regional context and cohesion. Finally, in hope of shedding light on any contested notions of identity in the regional context, and the particular sets of power relations they reflect, I approach regional identities as social constructions and products of discourses, reified through relations with other territories and identities via power dynamics and geopolitical strategies (Murdoch, 2006).

Constructive Regionalization and the Importance of Regional Identity

In this project, I refer to forms of state territoriality and policy that emphasize "the region" and regional identity-building, facilitated through the discursive dissemination of state-produced knowledge (Hakli, 2001) for the purposes of solving potential problems (Sack, 1986) as *constructive regionalization*. I suggest that states may choose to practice constructive regionalization to address three major themes: stability/governance, economic development, and geopolitical strategy. I want to demonstrate that in each case, the success of constructive regionalization is ameliorated by the local population's recognition and compliance with state-approved notions of the region, including the proliferation of "the region" as an identity marker.

To address issues of stability and governance, constructive regionalization serves to mediate perceived scalar notions of identity and place in the context of a greater state meta-geography (Lewis and Wigen, 1997; Paasi, 2002, Murphy, 2008). The association with a region as an identity marker constitutes a way to create commonality among unrelated groups, giving them a reason to build a cohesive sense of identity, which is especially important in diverse areas

and multi-ethnic states (Murphy, 1989). Because people are apt to identify with more localized territorial constructs due to lived experience and familiarity (Knight, 1982), regional identities constitute a more localized and culturally identifiable sense of cohesive belonging that do not force populations to rely solely on state-scaled identity constructions. However, maintaining emphasis on a region's role within the greater state structure is vital for the prevention of centripetal regionalism, where regional organization is based on contested politics of identity (Jones and MacLeod, 2004). Therefore, approaching how states seek to manage regional identities, or promote state-approved regional identities, is important for understanding why problematic regionalism and separatism are issues in some regions and not others.

Constructive regionalization can play a role in dealing with issues of uneven state economic development. Evidence from economic geography has suggested that both states and the regions can benefit from regionalization economically (Scott and Storper, 2003). Through processes like re-scaling (Swyngedouw, 1996) and the branding of regions (Vainikka 2012), regional economies come to develop specialized agglomeration economies that compete at the global scale. Such processes can be state-initiated or "state-driven," where the state plays a role in initial investment and infrastructural development in the region, and works to create an environment in which foreign direct investment will enter the region (Scott and Storper, 2003). State-sponsored discourses work to establish notions of economic identity, 'branding' the developing region with a particular economic identity, which can be crucial for attracting foreign direct investment (Vainikka, 2012). Through constructive regionalization, regions become associated with a particular economic sector and compete at the global scale, which brings in revenue and ultimately turns previously poor performing areas into state revenue generators (Scott and Storper, 2003). Therefore, if they are successful, these discourses' impact on notions

of "the region" as an identity marker should be evident in that they promote and project optimistic feelings about the region's economic future. In the case of the North Caucasus, if residents of the region can understand the specialized economic role that their region has taken on, and believe that efforts at constructive regionalization will create economic opportunities, they should be motivated to remain in the region as opposed to seeking opportunities outside.

Successful constructive regionalization can also play an important role in a state's geopolitical strategy, especially when applied in border regions (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999), which can be thought of as gradual zones of transition from one territory to another, where governments tend to focus attention on political and military aspects of control (Popescu, 2012). How states choose to frame and represent their actions in border regions in terms of resource allocation, security strategies, and the identification and resolution particular localized issues or threats demonstrates their commitment to dealing with issues of security to the rest of their citizenry. Border regions, which stand somewhat removed from central state territory, can therefore be used as discursive showpieces for the state. Because states have a monopoly on official statistics and how these statistics are represented (Foucault, 1991; Hakli, 2001), states can use these representations in sets of geopolitical discourses, which work to promote their own versions of truth and advance their geopolitical agendas (Ó Tuathail, 2006). Representation and geopolitical discourse, along with other aspects of constructive regionalization, can thus result in regions becoming associated with certain trends that work toward promoting state strategy. For example, border regions can become understood as buffers between a state's core areas and perceived outside threats (Tuncer, 2000), which can work to isolate problematic characteristics in regional context and keep them separated from other parts of the state.

Discourses on regional identity may be presented by the state in attempt to associate people with regional territory, and broadcast characteristics regarding these people. Through their dissemination, these discourses can work to promote positive attributes associated with the region and its inhabitants (economic opportunity, security, cultural, and values) and discourage negative attributes (terrorism, corruption, and crime). Such discourses may be disseminated through various means, such as though formal state or regional level policies, institutions, or though state-produced/approved media. Because these discourses are presumably broadcast within 'the region' in question, people living within 'the region' are forced to confront these discourses in comparison to their own lived experiences when considering their own personal constructions of identity. Contested notions of identity, where the "identity of the region" (Paasi, 2003) classified by the state is not congruent with people's experience-based "regional consciousness" (Paasi, 2003), are reflective of power relations and may be indicative of potential problems for the implementation of state policies. This idea is important for examining why some regions perform integrated roles in the greater state, and why others exhibit a lack of trust (Bourdieu, 1998) for the state and resist integration.

The Case in Question: The North Caucasus

A case where issues of governance, development, and geopolitics are being addressed through constructive regionalization is the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation, located on Russia's southwestern periphery. Due to this region's historically isolated populations, along with their reactions to attempts at submission by various incantations of the Russian State, the North Caucasus is often cited as a major obstacle to Russian governance, territoriality, and security (see Cornell, 1997; Taylor, 2007; O'Loughlin and Witmer, 2011). The

contemporary North Caucasus is a landscape of great geographic and socio-cultural diversity, where many of the region's local peoples' identities are firmly rooted in their relations with Russian governance (Richmond, 2008).

Contemporary Russian governance operates under a system known as "ethno-federalism," where provincial territories are under the authority of the federal center, and are defined based on the allocation of territory to particular ethno-national groups. The Soviets first implemented ethno-federalism to mediate issues of national self-determination with the goal of creating a cohesive Soviet-identity for the entire state (Wixman, 1980). Contemporary Russia has continued this system, but focused on consolidation, putting emphasis on civic-Russian nationalism as a cohesive identity among its functional regions (Hughes, 2001). According to ethno-federalism, certain territories are afforded varying degrees of autonomy from the federal center, according to their territorial statuses. There are six types of federal territories (provincial scale) in contemporary Russia, three of which can be observed in and around the North Caucasus: *krays*, *oblasts*, and republics. *Krays*, such as Stavropol *Kray*, and *Oblast*s, like Rostov *Oblast*, are fully integrated federal subjects with majority Russian populations. Republics, like Karachay-Cherkessia and North Ossetia-Alania, tend to be majority non-Russian and have autonomous status that allows them official languages other than Russian, the establishment of their own legal codes, separate constitutions, and named ethno-national (titular) recognition and status.[1]

Politics in Russia's Post-Yeltsin era have generally focused on unity, conservation, and consolidation, particularly in respect to "vertical power," streamlining control from the president through lower scales of government (Pomeranz, 2009), "federal district reform," creating

[1] Article 63 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation

regionally based constellations of provincial territories under direct control of Moscow (Hahn, 2003), and the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) aimed at promoting regional economies and attracting foreign direct investment (Litwack and Qian, 1998). I suggest that all of these changes could be seen as evidence of constructive regionalization, as each of these policies has worked to change the definitions and identity markers associated with the North Caucasus in particular. Many scholars have theorized that in order to maintain control and stability, Moscow must control the extent to which regionalisms are allowed to become salient (Nunn and Stulberg, 2000). Therefore, these strategies have resulted in increased emphasis on regional identification, where regions function as integrated entities in relation to the federal center, with the ultimate intention being that regions collectively understand their role as part of an integrated Russian federal whole (Chebankova, 2008).

The changing policy on issues of nationality and ethno-national identity in Russia, along with the associated territorial implications connected to national territory, population dynamics, and administration, have been an important topic for geographers focusing on Russia (Kaiser, 1994). Such issues are especially evident in Russia's formal geopolitics (Ó Tuathail, 2003, 2006) today, namely in the form of a new version of state nationalities policy crafted by four Kremlin advisors and signed into law on December 19, 2012. The status of the North Caucasus is cited as motivation for the new policy, namely in terms of "an outburst of ethnic mobilization, ethno-territorial separatism, and religious-political extremism." The advisors also claim that Russia faces a "the threat of disintegration," which they suggest has come about due to "a high level of social inequality in society and regional differentiation, ethno-politicization of various

spheres of life" along with "corruption, failings of the law-enforcement system, and the distrust of citizens in the organs of power."[2]

Moscow has shown great willingness to devote attention to and become deeply involved fiscally and militarily in the North Caucasus (O'Loughlin et al., 2008). This allocation of financial resources (subsidies) from the federal center to the region demonstrates concern for the region by attempting to keep it financially stable so as to prevent discontent. Such discontent has manifested in separatist movements, which are still active to some degree in many of the republics. The republics in the North Caucasus are commonly cited as cause for concern in terms of disintegrating qualities due to their problematic history, relatively weak economies, isolated peripheral location, and interest from Islamist factions from outside Russia (Richmond, 2008). Functionally, dealings within the region tend to be heavily influenced by regional elites and nationalist, religious, and sub-regional political and economic actors who respond to Moscow according to their own territorial and socio-cultural agendas (Hanson, 2006). These power dynamics have enabled the forging and construction of many possible identity markers to which the various peoples of the North Caucasus may self-ascribe when participating in various contexts.

The relationship between the North Caucasus and the Russian State demonstrates how regions can become a showpiece for policy. The fact that Moscow approaches the North Caucasus as a contextualized territorial construct, and as a target for specialized attention, allows Moscow to demonstrate what it is willing to do in order to solve problems, and how it is willing

[2] Globe, Paul "Window on Eurasia: New Nationalities Strategy Paper Offends Russian Nationalists." Published October 18, 2012: http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2012/10/window-on-eurasia-new-nationalities.html

to go about promoting its will among its many geopolitical relations. The North Caucasus is therefore presented as an example of what happens when the rules are followed, and when they are not, such as in cases like the destruction and rebuilding of Grozny. The region is also an anomaly in post-Yeltsin territoriality in that it seems to run contrary to the contemporary strategies of centralization and consolidation. It is the only region of Russia being uniquely defined and singled out, rather than brought under a greater territorial umbrella, which is perhaps evidence of the state's desire to promote a specific sense of North Caucasus regional identity. If people in the North Caucasus accept a formalized, regionally-based homogenizing marker of identity, its constructive regionalization could arguably be seen as successful.

A cohesive and state-approved regional identity in the North Caucasus, acknowledging the region's integrated place in a greater Russian meta-geography, is important for the Russian state. Economically, a cohesive and integrated North Caucasus would form a successful agglomeration based on tourism, which would ultimately not only support the region itself, but also create revenue for Moscow and possibly benefit the rest of Russia. In terms of governance, a cohesive North Caucasus would theoretically be less corrupt and more apt to act in the interests of the region, and ultimately the rest of Russia, rather than for the interests of individual provincial territories and/or actors. Culturally, a cohesive North Caucasus would embrace the region's various ethno-national and religious groups as part of a unique regional manifestation of civic-Russianness, lessening the potential for social cleavage, violence, and terrorism. In a geopolitical sense, a cohesive North Caucasus would mean stability on Russia's southwest periphery, and a buffer zone between Russia proper and perceived threats from outside, such as growing Islamist movements, NATO encroachment, or instability along Russia's southern borders. In contrast, cleavages in identity could point to contested power relations, which have

the potential to work against constructive regionalization in regard to any of these aspects. In this project, I work to examine whether or not such cleavages exist among residents of the North Caucasus, in which segments of the population they exit, why they are pronounced, and their significance for constructive regionalization.

Stavropol's Importance

Stavropol is a uniquely important place in Russian and the wider region due to its position at the crossroads of social, political, security, and resource agendas, often serving as a lynchpin of Russian control and stability. Stavropol can be understood as the most advanced Russian outpost in the North Caucasus region, based on its military history and role in ethnic relations and confirmed by its firm inclusion within the North Caucasus (Foxall, 2013). Its geopolitical significance for Russia is often noted by geographers from Russia itself, such as Belozerov (2005), who argues that Stavropol *Kray* is one of contemporary Russia's most strategic locations. Few of Russia's provincial areas have received as much attention as the North Caucasus in regard to strategic importance, and ethnic relations are not the only critical element in its significance. As Ware (1998) suggests, the Caucasus region receives much strategic focus due to resource reserves and its critical geographic location for the transport of said resources, primarily in the form of pipelines that can bring oil and gas west from Central Asia; those powers concerned include Russia, Turkey, Iran and the United States. Stavropol's perceived role in regional stability certainly makes it a key factor, or perhaps an indicator, in the function of the wider region.

Stavropol has received much attention among geographers and other social scientists interested in issues of regional, civic, and ethno-national identity. Stavropol is also important for

those interested in contemporary Russia and its territorial administrative policies and the roles that the North Caucasus plays at various geopolitical scales. Stavropol has come to constitute a frontier area through its historical and contemporary location and utilization, serving as a conceptual area of division between Russian and non-Russian ethno-national territory. Markedonov (2009) has termed the Stavropol region a distinctive border line that separates "the Russian World" from the "Caucasus World." As the only primarily ethnic Russian territory included in the recently state-defined North Caucasus, via the institution of the North Caucasus Federal District, Stavropol is positioned to play a key and unique role in ethno-territorial discourses in Eurasia (Foxall, 2012). Studying identity in Stavropol is also useful for greater social science applications. It constitutes a place to gather integral regional scientific knowledge, which supports research based on the agendas of world socio-political knowledge, such as that promoted by Mann (2004). Understanding territorial identity in Stavropol also has specific implications for political geography. Prominent political geographer Ansi Paasi (2009), has called for new research regarding markers of regional identity, how regional distinctions and classifications are produced and reproduced, how they express relations of power, how regional identities are manifested, and the purposes of articulating regional identities. Stavropol and the North Caucasus represents a laboratory in which to further study each of these ideas.

Studying Stavropol, with its multi-ethnic landscape and its role in the contexts of Russia and wider Eurasia as a cultural and religious transition zone, presents an opportunity to investigate the various forms of identity to which its population associates. Therefore, by studying and interacting with the local population through fieldwork and observation, I was able to gain insights into this particular case of regional identity, which may prove useful to other researchers working in political geography in multi-ethnic landscapes, those studying issues of

regional identity and regionalism, or scholars working more broadly with populations in Eurasia more broadly.

Geopolitical implications of multi-ethnic regions like Stavropol serve to showcase interactions and expressions of complex territorial identities at varying spatial scales. Understanding such identities, along with how they are manifested socially and politically, is important because the social processes that aid in their construction and maintenance, often reflective of state-level policy, regularly serve to indicate and affect geopolitical stances of their particular state's leaders and institutions (O'Loughlin et al. 2007). In this study, identities present in Stavropol and the rest of the North Caucasus could be understood as a direct reflection of such policies (ethno-federalism, federal district reform, etc.). Therefore, empirical research and methodologies that work to clarify important markers of identity, quantify their importance to the population, and understand their impact on regional social dynamics from qualitative analysis, are potentially useful to further understand a region's geopolitical role within state context.

In Russia, empirical studies have suggested that Western theories of inclusive nationalism, based on civic behavior and imagined groups or countries, are lacking in their explanation of national identity, as Russians are faced more with issues of institutionalized ethnic identification, hierarchical territorial identification, and self-identification that are often affected by issues of freedom and civil rights (Chernysh, 1995). This study's examination of how local people map markers of identity allows for an analysis of identity that takes into account these kinds of hierarchical identities.

Stavropol, along with the rest of the North Caucasus, constitutes a landscape of social consciousness formed and presented as the manifestation of ethno-separatism, nationalism, xenophobia, and competing claims, or "memory wars" in regard to nations, ethnic groups and

subgroups (Astvatsaturova and Chekmenev, 2013). However, where these narratives are defined and the territorial contexts in which they are understood, are not necessarily consistent. Empirical research on how territorial consciousness is represented among the local population has the potential to further understandings of how the groups involved in these narratives see territory in terms of their own identity constructions. In the North Caucasus, ethnic renaissance in the post-Soviet context has become institutionalized, partly through the promotion of myth-like interpretations oriented into social belief and practice; the resulting interpretations on ethno-national identities take up meaning as identity markers, which have an impact on global, regional and local living ability (Astvatsaturova and Chekmenev 2013). These ideas are important for understanding the effects of post-Soviet ethnic awareness and its territorial implications.

Finally, literature on Stavropol and the North Caucasus is dominated by work on security and conflict, as the Caucasus been perhaps even over-represented in certain circles going all the way back to the geopolitics of the Russian Empire (Funch, 1998). However, there is a need for empirical data and analysis from 'inside' the region to better understand its geography beyond the themes of ethnic conflict, center-region dynamics or growing religious fundamentalism (O'Loughlin et al. 2007). Stavropol is a place where new methodologies and research techniques could potentially benefit the body of literature already produced, taking into account Stavropol 's location, symbolic significance, front and center position in several interrelated discourses. For example, most of the demographic and socio-economic research conducted on Stavropol has tended to follow widely accepted methods of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, focusing on several categories of identity, such as civic versus ethno-national association, language use and inequalities among groups in post-Soviet development and ethnic conflict (O'Loughlin, 2007; Foxall, 2010). However, as Tishkov (1999) argues, existing categories used to study the

former Soviet Union, such as language and socio-economy, and resources bases, fail to look at strategies of individuals, social and political disorder, power and status aspirations, elite manipulations, and outside interventions. Therefore, viewing spatial awareness and group cohesion among groups that exist in these terms provides a new way to explore conceptions of identity, through an overtly territorial focus. An analysis of group territorial perceptions in Stavropol shows whether groups and territories that are treated as cohesive units in political discourse and actually understood in such terms by the local population. Since the Stavropol region is often treated as a focal point of competing regional, ethno-national, and religious identities, it presents the chance to examine several factors of identity among the diverse members of its population, and analyze how territorial identity is understood in terms of these other factors.

Potential Impact

Through my work on regional identity and constructive regionalization in the North Caucasus, I hope to show the relevance of studying intra-state territorial relationships and identity dynamics in regional context, using this region as a laboratory to gain insight into how regional identity is manifested in the midst of constructive regionalization and lived experience. Through my methodology, I focus on measuring group affinity for ideas of civic, place-based, ethno-cultural, religious, and linguistic markers of identity. I also gathered data on participants' cognitive spatial perceptions regarding the territorial manifestation of identity markers and present visual representations of these perceptions. I compared groups of participants so as to analyze cleavages and commonalities in how they view the North Caucasus region, gaining insight into power relations and issues of trust among groups in regard to the Russian state.

Trends in the data revealed how cohesively group members responded in regard to the various identity markers, providing insight into which groups either have or lack a strong sense of collective identity. I also seek to uncover nuances in collective beliefs of various socio-cultural groups in the region, which may or may not be in agreement with official sets of statistics.

Because groups with contested regional identities might be problematic to the process of constructive regionalization, the propensity for them to exert their identities may influence how they come to be represented discursively, and also how state policy is applied to them in the future. I also interviewed participants in order to gain insight into people's perceptions of their region's role within greater Russia, along with their opinions regarding the relationship between Moscow and the North Caucasus, and core-periphery relations more widely. My hope is that my findings and research techniques could help guide scholars working on issues of regionalism and regional identity in other post-Soviet regions, and those researching other parts of the world, in developing their methodologies and research projects.

More broadly, I believe that my project may be useful for learning how identity markers are ascribed meaning spatially and how these meanings are dealt with discursively. I aim to make a contribution to the growing literature on contemporary regional geography by gaining insight into the salience of regional identity markers, providing clarification on how regional identity is manifested among diverse populations, and by examining the purposes and strategies for articulating regional conceptions in geopolitical discourse. My research methodology and potential findings could be useful for examining cognitive conceptions of regional territory and identity in other regions of the former Soviet Union and Europe, such as Ukraine, Catalonia and the Basque country, Belgium, or Northern Italy, and in other places where regional identities

play a role in state discourses of economic development, governance, and geopolitical organization.

Chapter II: Theory

In this project, I draw on three major theoretical themes. First, I approach the literature on territory, territoriality, and scale to explore how constructive regionalization factors into to the contemporary territoriality of the Russian state, specifically Russia's ethno-federal system of governance, nationalities policy, and recent polices regarding federal district reform. Here I will focus on how state territory is made in Russia, using the North Caucasus as an example to explore issues of unevenness and varying degrees of territorialization exercised by the state, how regionalization fits into to Russia's territorial and geopolitical strategy, and the role that territory is perceived to play in solving problems in Russia.

Second, I focus on theory regarding identity and place, concentrating on the territorial attachments of participants in terms of how they perceive organizations of social codes, resources, and communication spatially (Knight, 1982). I am interested in people's sense of place (Tuan, 1974) as it pertains to issues of consciousness and territorial affinity, which could have effects on their cognitive conceptions of the region. I also want to examine how participants' emotional connections to their environments affect their opinions regarding their attachment to the North Caucasus, and how these attachments fit with other identity constructs existing in the greater Russian context.

Finally, I will incorporate the concept of discourse as it applies to the North Caucasus and suggest how the discursive construction of a region can play a role in identity-building, as well as to accomplish geopolitical and organizational goals for the state. When attempting to analyze feelings and attitudes it is important to understand the kind of communication, information exchange, and formalized literature to which a population is exposed. In the case of the North Caucasus, I am interested in the local population's take on policies that work toward constructive

regionalization in terms of how these policies are communicated, the attitudes that are produced toward the region itself, and the expectations help by people in the North Caucasus regarding the various discursive themes presented to them from the Federal Center.

Scale

Scale is extremely important for understanding political geography because scalar conceptions, regardless of whether or not they are, constructed, or imposed, are reflective of political and cultural dealings and accentuate relations between different constellations of political organization (Paasi, 2004). For this project, I will be examining sub-state and regional scales in Russia, particularly in terms of how these ideas are manifested in group constructions of territorial identity. I approach the scaling of the Russian Federation as reflective of state territoriality, governance, and power relations. I recognize scale as socially constructed and promoted to facilitate presumed requirements, or as Agnew (1995) suggests, 'scaling-up' or 'scaling-down' in terms of infrastructural power according to political economies of scale to meet scalar geographical needs. The post-structural turn in geography has focused away from traditional conceptions of scale, due namely to the fact that approaching scale as rigid, given, and inherent limits the understanding of flows, networks, and relations, which are more appropriate ways to theorize spatial processes in the face of increasing globalization (Allen, Massey, and Cochrane, 1998). I approach scale as being constructed in an attempt to organize, control, or limit flows and networks and to contextualize relations and access in the state structure. Howitt (2003, p. 142) suggests that scale's real value is that it indicative of contest, referring to scale as a "co-constituent of complex and dynamic geographic totalities." I see scalar notions as being evidence of this contest, and as reflective of historically contingent moments in their resolution

process. Therefore, there is no universal, regionally fixed scale. Instead, regional scale is a process of scaling practices and discourses that produce and reproduce various conceptions of the region (Paasi, 2009).

O'Lear and Diehl (2007) argue that the concept of scale has multiple aspects, including the observational scale, which describes the spatial extent of an area, the measurement scale, which reflects the resolution of data, the operational scale, which reflects the spatial extent of processes, and the cartographic scale, which deals with the visualization of phenomena. All of these elements of scale are products of human practice. O'Lear and Diehl (2007) note that scale should be problematized as it relates to various processes, not taken as a given container for these processes. Scale should not be seen as preexisting, as it is in a constant state of construction. Therefore, scale in and of itself, is not necessarily meaningful, but it becomes a way of understanding social interactions when it can be understood relationally in terms of specific places, processes, and actors (O'Lear and Diehl, 2007). For the purposes of this project, I treat scale as a discursive tool which, by various means of representation, is used to convey particular spatial and territorial messages. These messages are never objective, as all regional ways of knowing claim area for the purposes of exclusion and or consolidation to serve some interest. Contemporary Russia has undergone scalar regionalization on purpose, and scalar representations of territory and place are relevant to the formation of place identities among the population. Because scales can be viewed epistemologically, affecting the ways we know the world (Jones, 1998), scalar knowledge has the potential to affect place identities. Russia is known in scalar terms that reflect centuries of historically contingent strategies of territoriality and power relations (Paasi, 2002). Russia is known regionally, and how places and people are

identified in terms of their belonging to a region has both a social and potentially material impact on how they participate in various flows and networks within Russian society.

Territoriality

Territoriality as a means for solving problems is a major concept in my research. As a foundation for understanding territoriality, I draw on Robert Sack's (1983, 1986) work on "human territoriality." Sack (1983) suggests territoriality to include strategic actions intended to enhance or impede interaction which, via contact, extends the details of these actions. According to Sack (1983), territoriality, as a process, takes place when 'x' (persona, group, or class) attempts to exert influence on 'y' (persona, group, or class), thus inferring a transfer of energy between 'x' and 'y.' Types and severity of energy exchange are manifested in contact, where contact events occur along a continuum. Occurrences of contact can range from the exchange of information to direct physical interactions.

Sack (1983) also proposes degrees by which space is territorialized, giving the example of a maximum security prison as being territorialized to a more severe degree than a half-way house. This example also fits when thinking of Russia's federal structure, which exhibits territories that are more territorialized (*Oblasts*, *Krays*, Federal Cities) and less territorialized (Republics). For Sack (1983; 1986), territoriality brings order into space according to a number of possible methods of assertion, including: legal rights to land and cultural norms, or the restriction or legal repression of these elements. Therefore to have territory implies that there is an established order in space. This order is often manifested through the establishment of spatial hierarchies, which come to represent the relationships between those controlling and those being

controlled; these relationships become defined within the social context according to uneven access to people and materials (Sack, 1983).

Territoriality works through hierarchical forms of knowledge transfer, where the power to carry ideas is easily communicated through the establishment of boundaries that symbolize and define spatial positions and ideas of belonging versus exclusion (Sack, 1983). Contemporary Russian territoriality can thus be thought of in terms of relations between those controlling, Moscow, and those being controlled, federal territories. Designations, like status as a Special Economic Zone, or types of autonomous status, constitute defined spatial position and exclusion, which are communicated via the federal relationship.

Understanding Russia as a metageography, or a set of spatial structures and frameworks though which knowledge is organized (Lewis and Wigen, 1997), is helpful for understanding contemporary Russian territoriality and constructive regionalization. Although the concept of metageography is often applied in regard to the study of supra-state relations, Murphy (2008) argues that it is also useful for understanding regions. Ansi Paasi's (2002a) view of metageographies is also appropriate to consider for Russian regional territoriality. According to Paasi (2002a), in order for a shift in metageographic understanding to occur "a transformation is needed in the existing forms of state territoriality and in the key institutions that engender this transformation" (p. 199). Implementation of Special Economic Zones and federal district reform constitutes new territorial arrangements for Russia. These arrangements demonstrate a shift in Russia's internal territorial strategy, prompting changes in the state's overall metageographic understanding. Russia has undergone a metageographic evolution, whereby the promotion and building of regional identities serves the support an integrated federal body.

John Agnew's (2005) concept of sovereignty regimes is also useful for understanding state territoriality. Agnew describes sovereignty regimes as styles of rule, though which states are able to combine central authority and political territoriality, gaining the ability to practice sovereignty from within their borders and outside of them, maintaining internal order and protecting themselves from outside threats. Sovereignty regimes are contingent on internal authority, which Agnew (2005) identifies as the legitimate exercise of power administered via networks of apparatus. He notes that no state has absolute power, and there are always sources of competing authority, such as religious organizations, social movements, business, and so on. Sovereignty regimes, according to Agnew (2005), exist in various forms that may or may not be predicated on states. Russia is what Agnew refers to as a "classic sovereignty regime," where authoritarian control and infrastructural power are mainly utilized within a bounded state territory, exhibiting a high degree of effective and centralized state political authority. In contrast, a supra-national arrangement like the European Union is an "integrative sovereignty regime," where the practice of sovereignty is more complex because it coexists at different levels, ranging from EU-wide sovereignty, to state-sovereignty, to various manifestations at the sub-state and regional scales. The differences between these two sovereignty regimes are important when considering regionalization and re-scaling. In Russia, distinctive economic and political regions and re-scaling efforts are ultimately decided via streamlined authority from Moscow. These decisions are made according to the presumed good of both the regions and the Russian state. In Europe many scalar actors and economic processes are necessary to negotiate regional issues, typically for reasons other than simply the benefiting the EU.

Establishing political legitimacy over territory is an important factor for state territoriality. O'Lear (2007) suggests that one way to gain political legitimacy over territory is

by establishing "the right to make rules." How states go about establishing political legitimacy can provide insight into state-stability, allowing us to measure the acceptance of political actors based on how well they are able to gain public acceptance, and in some cases approval (O'Lear, 2007). Political legitimacy also has impacts on internal state sovereignty, which is often indicative of a state's ability to establish and consolidate notions of national identity (O'Lear, 2007). Political legitimacy is a critical element for the North Caucasus, as the region has undergone several major structural changes in its ruling political regimes in the post-Yeltsin era, none of which have been democratically prompted by the local population. How people view their provincial governments, federal district leaders, and ultimately federal authorities may have an effect on how they quantify the territorial aspects and extents of their identities, and to which scale of territory they associate legitimacy.

Murphy (2008) says that we take territoriality seriously by looking at how and why particular territorial strategies are pursued, and how the results of these strategies may be affecting how said actions are understood. In Russia, efforts at state territoriality have sought to produce an integrated geographical hierarchy of territories, which includes regional notions. The identities that the state supports for its regions are linked to a greater conception of their place within the federal whole. However, the eventual formation of territories and their associated identities represent a resolution between state-sponsored territoriality and localized identities. Therefore, we should see the map of Russia as the culmination of contested territorial strategies and actions that have been successful in their attempt to define territory, and impact how places and institutions are organized, and how people perceive their surrounding environments. Murphy (2008) notes that national identity and state identity play a role in territoriality, differentiating nationalist and non-nationalist forms of identity, where nationalist identity is

based on factors of language, ancestry, and peoplehood, and non-nationalist identity is based on economic, social, and political identity. This distinction is important when looking at the promotion of civic Russian identity versus ethno-national identity.

Identity and Place

The concept of "sense of place" plays an important role in forming territorial consciousness and emotional connection to one's contextualized surroundings. Yi-Fu Tuan's (1974) book *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values,* deals with the various aspects of sense of place and how humans perceive and form opinions based on their interactions with places. According to Tuan (1974), one's surroundings can become the basis for emotional bonds, formed through an overlapping convergence of ascribed values, attitudes, and observations that people experience in their environments. People are stimulated by basic interactions with their environments, where they gather perceptions which develop into to attitudes over time. These attitudes then overlap, eventually developing into cultural stance and world view. People rely on their sense of place when establishing opinions regarding where to (and where not to) conduct various activities when they have place-based choices. How people in the North Caucasus feel about their environment, the attitudes they hold about their place in the region and at other scales, and their opinions regarding qualitative elements and affect-related aspects of their region are critical for understanding what regional identity means in a cognitive sense. Because people associate qualities with territories, and various elements that those territories come to stand for, they may draw upon these opinions when asked to answer spatial questions, or make territorial value judgments when classifying territory according to the variables in this study.

The idea of group attachment to territory is also vital to understanding regional identity. Knight's (1982) work addresses some geographic elements of regionalism and nationalism in terms of how territory is regulated. He argues that territory is delineated with boundaries according to scale, where boundaries range from localized territorial constructs, to regional, to the state level, and so on. Rules exist within such boundaries that work to differentiate said territory from others, helping to distinguish places. States, according to Knight (1982), are essentially bounded spaces with legal systems of government. States constitute bounded containers for their contents, including people, resources, and means for communication. States provide both a sense of security and opportunity for their citizens, which work to foster a sense of belonging. However, Knight (1982) argues that this sense of belonging can differ as scale becomes more localized, and regions or certain groups of people become emphasized in the greater state context. In Russia, territories at all jurisdictional scales exhibit their own distinctive rules to some extent, but republics have become more distinguished in terms of difference, due to their autonomous status in Russia's federal structure. Organization of territories within a federal district also presents a situation where Knight's (1982) notion of emphasis on identity can be directly applied at the regional scale. If differing amounts of autonomy means different relations between people and territories, then grouping different kinds of federal territories (*Krays* and Republics) together under unified meso-level governance (federal districts) presents potential discord among the citizens of these territories who are used to functioning with greater autonomy in regard to their distinct sets of laws and cultural norms. A major challenge for regional identity-building in Russia is manifested in the necessary integration of distinctive territorial identities.

Agnew (1987) associates the concept of "sense of place" with his notion of "subjective territorial identity," or how one feels about an area. Agnew argues that it is through subjective territorial identity that meaning and place are associated. These associations are driven by emotion and experience, but also in response to the construction of the place in question. Therefore, before people can personally identify with a place, or said place can be used in the formation of group identity, it must be signified both geometrically, in terms of defined space, and through social action that associates space with meaning. Agnew (1987) suggests that for a place to exhibit meaning, it needs to be clearly defined, thus answering the question of 'where?' Agnew (1987) further suggests that within defined territories (locales), organized activities such as politics, work, and everyday life happen. Through these activities, associations to a place-based context can be established. Therefore, once a place has been contextualized both spatially and socially, emotional activities of those who experience meanings associated with said place work to affect their identities. Issues of identity and place in the North Caucasus are thus affected by how people understand the region in terms of its spatial properties and locative qualities, its association with social activities that are contextually predicated on the region, and the subjective emotions of those who use the North Caucasus as context for their own lives.

Relations among the many ethno-national groups in the North Caucasus, their constructs of territorial identity, as well as their potential to exist in cohesion are key pieces for identity-building and regional integration. Murphy's (1989) work focuses on sub-state scale legal rights for ethnically defined (regional) populations, particularly in regard to identity and interaction. He notes that territorial policies in multi-ethnic states are mediated by four main factors: issues of intent, relative power, spatial distribution, and preexistent development of ethnic consciousness. These issues are all heavily involved in Russian territoriality and regionalization,

as political leaders, elites, and various institutions work to achieve spatial goals. Russia's federal structure is full of inherent power relationships, and the balance of power between Moscow and the North Caucasus is a major relational factor.

The role of ethnic Russians in the North Caucasus is a critical part of this research, and their role in the North Caucasus can be understood in terms of Rogers Brubaker's (1995) work on "nationalizing states." Brubaker (1995) defines nationalizing states as acting like nation-states, while at the same time exhibiting a great degree of ethnic heterogeneity. In situations like Russia, Brubaker (1995) argues that elite individuals emphasize citizenship within the state, in this case civic Russianness, though the trappings of a "state-bearing nation," ethnic Russians. Therefore, if national minorities do not have an active sense of self-awareness and organization, their participation in the state ultimately leads to their assimilation into the state-bearing nation. The ethnic Russian population in the North Caucasus, based on Brubaker's (1995) notions of nationalizing states and state bearing nations, can be thought of keeping civic and vis-à-vis ethnic Russian society dominant among the various non-Russian groups of the region. Therefore, the departure of ethnic Russians from Stavropol *Kray* and the various North Caucasus republics could be indicative of resistance to the state-bearing nation, which could constitute challenges for Russia as a nationalizing state.

Ansi Paasi's work on territory, regionalization, and institutionalization is also important for this project. Paasi (2003) cites the regionalization of political desires as the most crucial question for understanding regional differentiation. These desires are sought out through institutions used in "region-building," namely economy, governance, language, media, and literature. He notes that how regions are institutionalized, and continually shaped through discourses, has a large part in determining how their regional identities are formed. Thus, Paasi

(2003) suggests that the "identity of a region" exhibits features of nature, culture, and people that are manifested in discourses and definitions of nature, culture, activism, business, governance, and political and religious distinctions that define a region in contrast to other regions. If people identify with practices, institutions, discourse, and symbols that represent "structures of expectations" that work to define a particular region, they exhibit what Paasi (2003) refers to as "regional consciousness." Therefore, in regions where the "identity of a region" and "regional consciousness" are congruent, these regions tend not to be at odds with the state.

Paasi (2003) suggests a dialectics in regional identity between the action from the top down by factions of territorial governance, and actions from the bottom up through forms of territorial identification and resistance. He argues that although regional identities are different from state-level identities, they do not necessarily have to run contrary to the will of the state. However, Passi (2003) notes that regional identities always have the potential to challenge hegemonic conceptions of state identity. This dynamic is visible in the North Caucasus, where state-sponsored notions of Russian civic and appropriate regional identity are presented from the top down, and may be contested via local groups and individuals with identities that do not match hegemonic attributes.

Paasi (2009) focuses on the meaning of regions in regard to contemporary globalization and global capitalism, acknowledging the literature on new regionalism and re-scaling in terms increased regional economic competition. However, Passi (2009) notes that issues of regional identity are also important for examining regional agglomeration because identity constitutes a way to indicate social cohesiveness in a region. Paasi (2009) argues that cohesiveness, founded in established regional identity, is important for mobilizing investment. He then draws on Romanelli and Khessina's (2005) concept of regional industrial identities, which suggests that

sets of social expectations emerge from commonly held beliefs of regional residents and external observes in regard to a region's for particular kinds of economic and investment activities. Therefore, for the North Caucasus to be a successful tourism agglomeration, a tourism-based identity has to be established both from outside the region and among the local population.

Paasi (2009) also emphasizes that while new regionalism tends to treat regions as administrative units, it must also be understood in terms of functional units vis-à-vis institutions such as labor markets. He argues that development or 'region-building' is more than an economic undertaking, necessarily encompassing politics, culture, and media. According to Paasi (2009, p. 133), regions are "complicated constellations of agency, social relations and power."

Drawing on the work of the aforementioned scholars on identity and place is critical for researching how participants in this study understand idea of the "North Caucasus" as an identity marker, which is necessary for contextualizing "the region" among other potential elements of identity two which participants might associate. As I have suggested, successful constructive regionalization depends on the state building and formalizing a strong sense of regional identity among target populations in a defined intra-state territorial context. Theory on identity and place, as applied to participant data on the North Caucasus, will help to explain trends in identity markers in terms of their meaning in the contexts of territorial and social associations in Russia, and help to view the extent to which "the region" factors in to how people understand their place in the state, and define themselves culturally.

Discourse, Production of Knowledge, and Critical Geopolitics

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault (1969) presents his view of the concept of discourse and how discourse is regulated, utilized, and altered in society. For Foucault (1969), discourses are most simply understood as ways of speaking, which in order to be socially comprehensible, operate according to a series of socially defined regulations. The main themes and ideas that come out of discourse come to constitute Foucault's view of knowledge. According to Foucault (1969), knowledge is accepted in society only when based in "true discourses." Therefore the idea of 'truth' is not constant but in a state of flux, being legitimized by social institutions. Truth needs to be understood through its socio-historical context, to reflect the changing character of social institutions (Foucault, 1969). Truth is interconnected with systems of power that produce it while at the same time shape it, resulting in a 'regime of truth,' or the sorts of discourse that are accepted and thus function as *true* **(**Foucault, 1980). Foucault (1969) provides educational systems as an institutional example in that they have the political capital to affect and disseminate discourse, along with knowledge and power associated with it.

Foucault (1980**)** suggests that state power networks relate in the form of a 'meta-power,' which is focused on exclusion. One such form of exclusion is the power to represent data, which is produced via science and therefore a form of knowledge based in true discourse. Foucault (1991) notes the association of 'population as datum,' as an 'objective of governmental techniques,' having implications on the government's ability to project statistics as reality. In Russia, the state has control of data collection, and ultimately the representation of those data. Therefore, the government, which is qualified by "science" and "true discourse," has the power

to create facts concerning the *populations as datum* and present those facts as part of a body of state-produced knowledge, which is inherently exclusive.

Bruno Latour's (1986) concept of "optical consistency" builds on the idea of state-knowledge production. Latour (1986) suggests that "visualizing devices," such as maps, make observation possible because they present images of space and objects in perceived consistent relation to how they appear in reality. According to Latour (1986, 8) through optical consistency: "Not only can you displace cities, landscapes, or natives and go back and forth and to and from them along avenues through space, but you can also reach saints, gods, heavens, palaces, or dreams with the same two-way avenues and look at them through the same 'windowpane' on the same two-dimensional surface." As long as the ratio is believed to be true, those who create visual representations via optical consistency are able to present grand-scale meanings according two dimensional representations they construct. Therefore, all state representations (namely maps) of the North Caucasus based on data exhibit and benefit from optical consistency to some degree.

Murphy (1990) suggests that disputed territory, such as a region, must be understood as the product of relations between an area and the ideologies and social processes that give it meaning, shaping the organization and implementation of territorial goals. He emphasizes the importance of language and discourse when examining how territories are contested, and argues that it fosters beliefs that ultimately lead to political action, suggesting that language constitutes the primary means of constructing reality (Murphy, 1990). Because representation of the North Caucasus via language and discourse is heavily controlled by the state, primarily through Russia's major Moscow-based broadcasting and journalism outlets, the North Caucasus *reality* that most of Russia receives is the *reality* that Moscow presents. Print media, along with

television and radio broadcasts, can be edited for content, meaning that the particular themes can be applied to the North Caucasus in the form of selective broadcasts. Visual aids, maps, and descriptions can also be framed in a manner that promotes a formalized sense of the region. For example, maps of the region that highlight the North Caucasus Federal District could be used in place of maps that highlight only state borders, or the borders of Russia's sub-federal territories, thus presenting the North Caucasus Federal District, a regional definition defined by the Russian state, as the "North Caucasus." Because such representations also broadcast in the North Caucasus, the relationship between regional identities, in terms of lived experience versus outside representation, constitutes a major factor for regional understanding.

Theory on state-knowledge production is important for understanding regional discourse, and how territorial opinions are influenced by Moscow's end of the center regional relationship. To better understand these issues theoretically, I draw on the work of Jouni Hakli (2001), who seeks to address interrelationships among governance, knowledge, and territory through his work on state production of knowledge. Hakli (2001) argues that the production of knowledge in a society is a critical element in the exercise of territoriality, where instead of presenting 'reality-as-it-is,' knowledge is utilized in the construction of social relations. This knowledge, which ultimately comes to represent social space, is never objective; it is always representative of some point of view that foregrounds various social features while backgrounding others. For Hakli (2001) modern states, which dominate spatial analysis due to their strong political role imagine themselves as territorial units through the organization of practices and defined sovereignty. He argues that state territoriality has become hegemonic because it has established "unconscious" or "taken-for-granted spatiality." Social scientists have (perhaps also unconsciously) worked to reify state scale dominance through state-to-state comparative analysis. Hakli (2001) also

suggests that state agencies have a monopoly on statistical and visual production of knowledge, or "visualizing devices" like maps and graphic representations of statistics, such as tables and charts.

The production of regional knowledge by the Russian state resembles Hakli's (2001) theory at the sub-state level. For constructive regionalization to be effective in solving the state's problems, regional knowledge must be produced, and ultimately become spatially unconscious. The Russian government's monopoly on statistical and visual knowledge production, as well as major media and journalistic outlets, allows for the production of knowledge about the North Caucasus that does not have to account for reality-as-it-is but rather forms of social knowledge that work to further the objectives of the state. Through the implementation of federal districts, the state has created a firmly defined regional unit of analysis, which when used for the purpose of scientific comparison via state-monopolized knowledge production, works to reify federal districts (regions) and thus advance a regionalized form of Russian territoriality. A high propensity of the population to ascribe to state-defined regional parameters should indicate successful state production of knowledge and effective dissemination via visual representation.

Ó Tuathail's (1996; 2003; 2006) work on critical geopolitics is important for linking states with knowledge production, strategy, and identity, and for uncovering agendas and interests through organizing a critical version of geopolitics. Ó Tuathail (2003) suggests formal, practical and popular geopolitics are three sets of discourses that can reveal a state's identity, role and agenda. According to Ó Tuathail (2003), formal geopolitics consists of work by intellectuals and strategists, manifested though political doctrine, government reports, and strategic studies. He argues that practical geopolitics is delivered through official state action, legal frameworks, diplomacy, and political speeches. He classifies popular geopolitics as discourses communicated

through mass media, public opinion and state ritual. These discourses are ways of presenting geography through culture and politics, which work to establish project new versions of truth (Ó Tuathail, 2006). These versions of truth are not objective but likened to the agendas of the intellectuals, organizations, politicians, or other actors that work to produce them (Ó Tuathail, 2006).

Through his work on the concept of "internal orientalism," David Jansson (2010) suggests that regions can come to be understood as binaries of imagined spaces, which he demonstrates by presenting internal orientalism as it pertains to the example of the American South. According to Jansson (2010), people living in spaces that become defined via internal orientalism may develop identities based on resistance, resulting in the discursive affirmation of ideas that present such spaces as substantively different. In Jansson's (2010) example, both constructs of "America" and the "South" are labeled as white spaces through racializing discourses. By virtue of theses discourses' thematic focus on racism and segregation, whites living in the South are faced with the choice of whether to accept or reject southern identity. Although someone's individual conception of identity certainly does not fully match the discursive definitions constructed by internal orientalism, individuals can be associated with the binary by virtue of perceived group belonging or membership vis-à-vis social identification and behavior. Although some work to promote alternative identities in internally orientalized space (Jansson 2010), rejecting Southern identity may have social consequences in localized Southern contexts, accepting it can mean admitting to social complacency by association with its discursively defined characteristics.

Jansson's (2010) example of internal orientalism in the United States is useful for understanding the relationship between "Russia" and the "North Caucasus." Just as "America"

and the "South" are racialized as white spaces according to Jansson (2010), the "Russian Federation" and the "North Caucasus" are both nationalized as "Russian" spaces. Ethno-national politics in Russia, although differing in many respects from racism and segregation in the United States, has resulted in a similar binary understanding of the federal population that oversimplifies Russia's citizens into *Russkiye* (ethnic Russians) and *ne Russkiye* (non-Russians). Ethnic Russians living in the North Caucasus face similar issues of identity to those experienced by white Southerners in America. Through discourses of internal orientalism, the North Caucasus has received connotations of being wild, uncivilized, and inherently different than Greater Russia. Based on the region's history of colonialism and contested relations between non-Russians and the Russian state, elements of North Caucasus identity are in some part founded on resistance. Ethnic Russians living in the North Caucasus could identify with their ethno-national identity, which brings with it connotations of domination and imperialism. They could also identify with the North Caucasus, which suggests connotations of difference in regard to the Russian state. Thus, ethnic Russians may choose not to associate themselves with the North Caucasus. Such an attitude could encourage them to look outside of the region when making employment, educational, or residential choices. The resulting flows of ethnic Russians out of the North Caucasus, along with their perceived connections to greater ideas of Russian culture and identity, constitute a challenge in terms of constructive regionalization.

While many aspects of discursive regionalization rely on internal orientalism to some degree, presenting the North Caucasus as a buffer zone for example, keeping ethnic Russians in the region is also important. The presence of ethnic Russians in the region demonstrates cohesion between the North Caucasus and the rest of Russia and provides justification for Moscow to take action in the region on behalf of the perceived well-being of ethnic Russians.

Therefore, how discourses of internal orientalism are affecting the regional identity constructions of ethnic Russians in the North Caucasus has the potential to work against efforts to create a cohesive North Caucasus identity, especially if such an identity requires that regional understandings actively emphasize an integrated role within the Russian Federation.

Tilo Felgenhauer's (2010) work on regional identity in Germany highlights how processes of symbolic regionalization, the use of performed social language, and discursive construction, can be used to create and define a region. Felgenhauer (2010) suggests a linguistic and material contingency among space, place, and regional identity, as well as the need for 'reflexive' understanding of the construction of regions in public discourse. He states that discourses on symbolic regionalism are usually reliant on geographic determinism to connect multiple notions of meaning with a particular limited region. These discourses come to stipulate implicit preconditions and myths regarding historic regional character and present sets of social practices as naturalized elements that are observable within defined regional boundaries. Felgenhauer (2010) presents territory as a key element to regionalization because regularly occurring reference to territorial units turns a region's existence and social importance into a "fact." Through discursive reference to territory, people infer meaning from a region's name, and according to Felgenhauer (2010), it is at this moment when "celebration" becomes "routine," when the region is reified. Regions are the most reified when the name of the region sparks a specific meaning rather than contested arguments about what defines it (Felgenhauer, 2010).

Though his work on Finish regionalization, Joni Vainikka (2012) focuses on regions as both processes and discourse, but also as "brands" that various stakeholders use in marketing. Vainikka (2012) states that regions are promoted via discourses, governmental bodies, planning organizations, and media. These organizations draw on supposed collective regional identities,

which are constituted in former and contemporary cultural practice and social discourse. According to Vainikka (2012) everyday conceptions of regional identity, within the regions themselves, may not reflect discourses promoted from above. Therefore, there is inherent inconsistency between the spatial 'imaginaries' of everyday life and conceptions of regional identity that are institutionally produced. Residents of the North Caucasus do not necessarily live their lives with tourism and terrorism at the heart of their identity constructions. However, these are important elements of regional identity promoted by Moscow via discourse, so as to be seen by the rest of Russia and the outside world. This idea lends itself to the fact certain discourses, such as those on ethnic-conflict, security, and economic development, as projected for the benefit of certain social agendas, might not overpower one's experience in everyday life.

Cognitive Maps and Spatial Cognition

Due the fact that my research methodology utilizes cognitive mapping to explore group preceptions of territorial identity, I feel that it is important to consider the theory behind this subject. Perhaps one of the most important works on the concept of cognitive mapping and spatial cognition is *The Image of a City* by Lynch (1960), which deals with people's individual understandings of spatial awareness and utility in urban contexts. Lynch (1960) argues that mental maps (cognitive maps) constitute one's primary means of navigation and spatial decision making. In *The Image of a City*, Lynch (1960) presents five important components for a cognitive map: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks, all of which, when understood collaboratively, provide an individual with the spatial awareness to conduct his or her behavior within a given environment. When viewing the cognitive maps produced in this study, it is important to consider the impact that these components have on participants' spatial awareness.

Because I am interested in participants' precieved knowledge, as well as how said knowledge is presented spatially, it is necessary to understand how preceptions are formed, and how they translate into spatial descision making. As Gould (1966) suggests, mental maps refer to images based on perceptions, which may be formulated with by individuals or by groups. In regard to the theoretical basis and importance of these images, Downs and Stea (1973) argue that cognitive maps are critical for understanding spatial behavior and decisions making because they constitute both the extent, and also the limits of one's spatial awareness. Therefore, the world is understood in terms of one's ability to cope with his or her individual set of knowledge, which itself may be put under various constraints. Decisions, attitudes, and behaviors are made within a limited spatial context, which may or may not reflect a reality recognized in the same way by others. In this study, I am interested in comparing local nuances among several socio-cultural groups in the North Caucasus, which may suggest whether or not these groups view their spatial contexts differently.

The links among cognitive maps, spatial awareness, and decision making are expounded upon by Gould and White (1974), who argue that members of a group will express a shared spatial viewpoint, based on the degree to which the individuals in the group agree on their various interpretations of reality. Therefore, collaborative assessments of group-based mental maps present a glimpse into the shared spatial conciseness of the group's members, which can be impacted by a variety of factors, such as aesthetic components, climactic elements, and time spent within a given environment (Gould and White, 1974). In the context of this study, I examine spatial concisensess of the practice of national traditions, langauge, religion and the extents of the North Caucasus region.

Realizing that lived expierence matters in forming one's cognitive map, it is important to consider the length of time participants have spent in the region. According to Gould and White (1974), the more time individuals and groups have spent in a given environment, the more acute their level of awareness becomes, thus leading to the idea of "cultural comfort zones." Identifying where a groups views its particular cultural comfort zone, provides insight into where its members may feel more at ease in terms of conducting behavior and engaging within their social environments.

While lived expierence is important for spatial cognition, external stimuli also have an impact on one's particular mental map. Pocock (1976) argues that a cognitive map is a mental image of an environment held by an individual, or group of people, which constitutes a store of spatial information that a person or group can recall in order to illustrate a particular place. According to Pocock (1976), these illustrations are based on information that is gathered through personal experience with one's environment, or via external contextual stimuli. Stimuli could include contextual information that presents space in an organized fashion, such as maps and globes, or stimuli could consist of cultural stimuli that peg qualities to places, ranging from cultural stereotypes to notable features in the landscape. Therefore, a mental map is essentially a product of one's ability to visualize space through perception, and then retain and ultimately recall this information (Pocock, 1976).

How one acquires the information needed to construct a cognitive map is extremely important, as his or her spatial perceptions are likely to be affected differently by stimuli from lived experience as opposed to external stimuli, such as second hand information. Raitz and Ulack (1981) take such issues into consideration, arguing that environments are often assigned various characteristic by both insiders and outsiders. Themes of spatial identity can therefore be

tested by comparing how and whether or not a group's members recognize and value spatial elements in a consistent fashion (Raitz and Ulack, 1981).

Tversky (1993) presents a view of cognitive maps where they are useful for studying course spatial relations and conceptions of environmental knowledge, but argues that cognitive maps offer quite restrictive representations due to fact that human minds are inherently prone to error in memory and judgment when recalling the characteristics of their various environments. I believe this reading on the concept of mental maps and their limitations is valid, and therefore supports the use of contextual templates for group cognitive mapping exercises. Templates, which could be borders or boundaries, provide a constant frame of reference for a research participant in a study group. Placing spatial limits on participants, while perhaps constraining their geographic imaginations, ensures that a basic spatial realm is established for the point of comparison.

Finally, Kitchin (1994) argues that cognitive maps are often an appropriate research tool for addressing "what" and "why" questions, especially in the areas of spatial behavior, spatial choice and decision making, wayfinding, orientation and attitudes and perspectives. According to Kitchin (1994), cognitive maps are a means to gain insight into how people create and cope with imaginary worlds. Thus, the ability to utilize cognitive maps as a means to gain insight into a person's opinion may indicate how he or she is likely to perceive space, hold spatial attitudes, and ultimately make spatial decisions.

Chapter III: Regional Backround and Stavropol's Role in Russia's Historical Geography

Conquest and control of North Caucasus has played a role in the geopolitical aspirations of Russia almost from its beginning, as the early Tsars recognized it as the meeting point of Tatar, Byzantine, Persian and Ottoman influence, while also treating it as a border between Orthodoxy Christianity and Islam (Ware, 1998). However, the Russian Empire needed several centuries to claim the steppes and mountains to its south. Prior to Russian expansion into the region, the Caucasus's lower foothills and steppes were populated primarily semi-nomadic groups with excellent cavalry skills, like the Kalmyks and Nogays; the mountains were inhabited by a variety of diverse cultural groups with an abundance of unique languages and local political associations, many of whom had militaristic capacity and wanted no part of Russian subjugation (Khodarkovsky, 2002). This combination of harsh landscape and political resistance meant that conquering the Caucasus would require a serious organized military effort by the Russian Imperial Army, which was facilitated to conduct the Russo-Turkish War in the late 1700s.

With large numbers of Russian troops already in the South, and the perceived geopolitical need to fortify newly established borders after the Russo-Turkish war, Russia established a series of forts known as the Azov-Mozdok defense line. This network of fortresses stretched from modern day Rostov-on-Don to the Terek River. The city of Stavropol first appeared as one of these fortifications, and became an integral part of this military system, and both Stavropol's location and purpose would become significant for its geopolitical future. From its very beginning, the city was built on the edge of the Russian Empire, constituting part of the last defense from outside others, notably non-Slavs and for the most part not Christians. Stavropol and the rest of the Azov-Mozdok line would take on the dual role of defense of Russian lands, and act as a launching point for offensive tactics, whether cultural, religious economic or military

related (Khodarkovsky, 2011). Thus, in many ways, Stavropol is a city designed to facilitate Russian identity, existing very much at the limits of what could be considered Russia in the 18th century.

The city of Stavropol soon expanded out from the fortress to accommodate the needs of the military personnel stationed there. It grew quickly and soon gained the distinction as the "Gateway to the Caucasus," a mantra that is still celebrated there today (Gaazov and Lets, 2006). Stavropol is cited by many scholars as an outpost for the dissemination of Russian economy and culture, which included the founding of the Stavropol Metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church (Krasnov, 1957; Khodarkovsky, 2011; Panin, 2003). The first Slavs to populate the area were Cossacks, originally from the Volga and Don Regions, who were relocated to the Caucasus serve as garrisons, but also to populate the area with a Slavic and Orthodox Christian population (Khodarkovsky, 2011). The Cossacks also served to protect the construction of Stavropol from around the fortress. Today, many people in Stavropol are still aware of their connections to these first Russian settlers, and local authorities are not opposed to reminding Stavropol's population of this link, as evidenced by the Cossack museum maintained by the city today.

Stavropol's importance as a border town meant that it served as a node in many networks during Russia's late imperial period. In addition to providing a military staging ground, many have argued that it constituted the most important center of trade and commerce for circulating goods and revenues between Russia and the many peoples of the Caucasus (Krasnov, 1957) (Gaazov and Lets, 2006). The city would go on to become part of the Great Cherkessk Road, which connected the region to Moscow and ultimately St. Petersburg via the Volga.

Stavropol continued to play an important role in the development of the Caucasus throughout the 19th Century, and was the first to receive many Russian cultural and economic

institutions in the region, including the region's first printing factory in 1816, the first institution of higher education in 1837, the first theater in 1845, a women's college in 1849, and the region's first library in 1852 (Gaazov and Lets, 2006). While much work was done to develop Stavropol's importance as a center of culture and development at it this time, it continued to serve as a very clear place of Russian imperial authority, and while some focus may have been on placed on cultural assimilation, and such assimilation had to take the form of inclusion into greater Russian identity (Foxall, 2013). Ethnic Russians were favored in Stavropol throughout its early history, in terms of both material wealth and social mobility. For example, they tended to acquire better places to live and the best farmland and were very much understood to be occupiers, both in Stavropol and throughout the North Caucasus region (Richmond, 2008).

Imperial era policies of identity and ethno-national awareness were focused on Russification, or becoming Russian, the basic idea being that anyone may become Russian, at least culturally, through ascribing Russian cultural markers, such as Russian language, practice of Orthodox Christianity, participation in the state's education system, and by interaction with Russian print media and literature. Non-Russian groups were defined and officially recognized based on categories of otherness, such as language, territory and religion, a process that came to be known as ethnification, common in many European colonial contexts (Funch, 1998). At the same time such policies worked to promote an ethnic understanding and consciousness among non-Russian groups, emphasizing that they were not Russian, and should work to become Russian, in the colonial context (Olivier, 1990). Since Stavropol's imperial role was to facilitate Russian expansion, such policies worked directly to affect its early demographics, administration and development. Therefore, its reputation as "Gateway to the Caucasus" can refer not only to is physical location, but as a transition zone between Russian and non-Russian peoples.

The Soviet Period and Its Ethno-Territorial Legacy

Ideas of ethno-national territory and identity in the North Caucasus were used by the Bolsheviks and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from the very beginning as one of the Bolsheviks' first strategies to gain non-Russians' allegiance was to seize land from Slavs, who were presumably loyal to the Tsar, and redistribute them to win support from indigenous peoples (Richmond, 2008). This trend developed into practices of ethnification (*korenizatiia*) and other Soviet nationalities policies (see Kaiser, 1994). Various attempts at nation building and ethno-territorial governmental policies would be used by the Soviets from Stalin to Gorbachev, all aimed at answering the elusive "National Question," or how to create a Soviet national identity to replace hundreds of ethno-national identities that had been established, fostered, and promoted throughout the Soviet period (Wixman, 1980). In terms of the overall legacy of Soviet territoriality, the work of several scholars points especially to importance of the Soviet federal structure and administrative policies in emphasizing and even creating exclusive identities situated in politically promoted national territories (Roeder, 1991; Suny, 1993; Kaiser, 1994; Brubaker, 1996).

Soviet territorial divisions in the North Caucasus, based on ethno-national lines of differentiation, went along with the ideology of "state-sponsored evolutionism," meaning that the state could show all of its different populations how to follow a Marxist-Leninist path to development, going from pre-national to national and all the way to communism, despite the fact that different groups began their assent at very different levels of development (Hirsch, 2005). Lenin himself was aware of the benefits and utility of ethno-national politics and organization and wrote on the subject, describing nations had four major characteristics, territorial

concentration, economic ties, a common language and a common cultural and psychological character (Lenin, 1962).

Lenin's ideas were furthered by Stalin's view of the national question, which combined ethnicity, territory and political administration, ultimately encouraging ethnic identity through cultural development policies, ethno-territorial organization, and through ethnic identification via an internal passport system which officially documented the nationality of each Soviet citizen (Ware, 1998). However, borders in the Stalin regime often did not accurately correspond with actual ethnic, linguistic, or cultural divisions (Kolossov, 1999). Thus, emphasis on territorial ideas would become one of the major markers of identity, critical for understanding one's place in the Soviet Union and a path for navigating post-Soviet ethno-national aftermath.

All territories in the Soviet Union could in some way be understood in ethnic terms, being allocated to some type of titular nationality, a group that officially belonged there and often exhibited certain rights not afforded to members of other ethno-national groups. There was also a firm hierarchy among different kinds of Soviet territories. Therefore, hierarchical territorial identities have their roots partly in the fact that many kinds of autonomous territories existed in Soviet space, including smaller ethno-national territorial units or simply loosely designated ethno-national areas (Kolossov, 1999). The Soviets used a complex hierarchy of territorial units founded on ethnicity, all with varying degrees of autonomy, the least autonomous being national *Okrugs*, the most autonomous being Union Republics. Each of these territories was supposed to reflect an historical state of national development, but also facilitate the territories' roles in the geographic, economic and cultural make-up of the greater Soviet state (O'Loughlin et al. 2007). One's identification with a particular ethnic or political territory is inherently hierarchical because people have many scales of territory to which they can ascribe

meaning, such as to a state, region, area or locality, and in recent times supranational identities are also coming into play (Kolossov et al. 2003).

While non-Russian groups who were deemed worthy of territorial recognition were well organized into official hierarchical units, concepts of Russian ethnic territory were a bit more ambiguous. The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, whose official capital was Moscow, was supposed to represent the Russian homeland, but this territory was itself broken and divided among many different groups possessing varying degrees of autonomy at various scales. This situation resulted in Russians as the def*aul*t hegemonic nation in the Soviet Union, leading to the idea that Russians could essentially be considered titular everywhere, ultimately resulting in Russian vis-à-vis Soviet control. As Szporluk (1994, p. 6) argues:

> After the revolution and civil war, a 'Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic' did exist within the larger structure of the Soviet Union, but it was not taken seriously, by Russians or non-Russians, as the Russian nation-state or the national homeland of the Russian people. In the prevailing view of the Russians, the whole of the USSR was the real Russia. The architects of the USSR did not treat the republics as real or potential nation-states. Moscow delineated their borders deliberately so as to make the republics incapable of independent existence. By putting together different peoples within one political entity, the party created the conditions under which its 'leading role' would be necessary for the operation of the complex system of 'autonomous' districts and regions and 'republics' within 'republics.' This ethnic mixing within ethnically designated territorial units could work only if the Communist Party remained in control.

Examples of such ethnic combination include the bi-ethnic titular republics, created via *razhmezhevaniya*, mixing in ethnic demarcation, exemplified in areas like Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria that border Stavropol *Kray* to the south.

As a *Kray*, Stavropol constituted a large, majority Russian territory that was planned to be economically self-sufficient, laid out by Soviet central planners via *Gosplan* (Hirsch, 2005). While much of Stavropol's utility to the Soviets came in the form of its agricultural productivity, it retained a bit of its Great Russian colonial legacy as it was placed in administrative control of

the Karachay-Cherkess Autonomous *Oblast* from 1957 until the end of the Soviet period. Also within Stavropol's jurisdiction were several other ethno-hierarchical constructions, such as the village of Tatarka, named for its predominately Tatar population, and Turkmenskij *Raion*, named for its Turkmen population. Stavropol's proximity to other territories, a situation set up by Soviet territorial policy, would come to have a major impact on its role in post-Soviet geopolitical discourse.

Contemporary Issues: Demographics and Socio-Cultural groups

Stavropol *Kray* is a territory understood to be predominantly ethnically Russian, according to its status as a *Kray* within the territorial hierarchy of the Russian Federation. As a *Kray*, Stavropol is under Moscow's direct authority, and therefore does not officially recognize languages other than Russian, or any governmental constitutions besides the Federal Constitution.[3] Although the population of Stavropol *Kray* has an overwhelmingly ethnic Russian majority, many minority groups are well represented in terms of overall numbers, and many more reside in ethnic pockets and villages clustered throughout the area. According to the 2010 all-Russian census, Stavropol *Kray's* population was 2,786,281 with ethnic Russian's comprising 80.9 percent, with some other notable groups with foremost representation being Armenians (5.8 percent), Dargins (1.8 percent), and Nogay (0.8 percent), data from all of which was collected for this project. These groups all have established histories in Stavropol and the North Caucasus, but enjoy different kinds of statues and ethno-territorial recognition in the region. While ethnic Russians and their history and effects on the region will be discussed in detail throughout this chapter, some additional information regarding Armenians, Dargins and Nogays is useful in

[3] Constitution of the Russian Federation

understanding some of Stavropol's minority group identity constructions and notions of territorial identity.

The Armenian diaspora is one of the oldest established in Southern Russia, beginning to form in earnest during the 1790s with the formation of Armenian villages and districts throughout the region, where they tended to become rather wealthy through filling various competitive economic niches (Markedonov, 2009). Armenians have an established reputation of trade in Russia, and were encouraged to settle in the North Caucasus region by Tsar Alexander I. Stavropol's contemporary Armenian populations have increased for the most part due to in migration from Azerbaijan following violence in Sumqayit and Baku, and conflict in Nogorno-Karabakh, and from Armenia after an earthquake in 1988 (Rowland, 2007). Cities like Stavropol were a good destination for Armenian migrants due to the well-developed communities and Armenian cultural presence already established there (Belozerov et al. 1998). Today, there are 161,324 Armenians in Stavropol *Kray*, according to the 2010 census.

Armenians are a unique minority ethno-national group in the North Caucasus because they do constitute a true Diaspora, as Armenia exists as an independent nation-state, outside the official jurisdiction of the Russian Federation. Armenians are also unique compared to other non-Russian ethno-national groups in the North Caucasus because the majority of them practice some form of Eastern Christianity, whether Russian Orthodox or as members of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Common religious traditions constitute a potential common marker of identity among Armenians and Stavropol's majority Slavic population. Although they share Christian beliefs and some traditions with Russians, Armenians in the North Caucasus have not been immune to discrimination and even violence targeted against non-Russians. Cossack organizations, and other Russian Nationalist groups, have called for the removal of Armenians

from the area and have exercised violence against Armenian populations in neighboring Krasnodar *Kray* on several occasions (Osipov and Cherepova, 1996; Kritskii and Savva, 1998). Despite this negative influence, Armenian culture constitutes one of the most vibrant and visible non-Russian ethno-national cultures present in Stavropol and its surrounding areas today. Armenians have also historically tended to be both aware and proud of their ethno-national culture, more so than many other ethno-national groups in the Stavropol region, while at the same time they are among the most willing to socialize and build friendships with members of other groups (Kolossov and O'Loughlin, 2009).

Dargins are an ethno-national group that has received much attention in Stavropol as of late, due to the group's tendency to choose portions of Eastern Stavropol *Kray* as a migration destination, and strained ethnic relations between Dargins and several other groups. Dargins, who have been traditionally identified as mountain people, living primarily in Dagestan for several hundred years, are rather integrated in the market economy, more so than some other ethno-national groups in Dagestan, and tend to possess capital and mobility (Eldarov et al. 2007). O'Loughlin et al. (2007) note that Dargins have demonstrated a strong propensity to migrate to the Stavropol region. The Dargin population in Stavropol *Kray* doubled between 1979 and 1997, and it has continued to grow due to the fact that Stavropol *Kray's* close proximity to Dagestan, along with its relatively stable socio-economic conditions, make it overwhelmingly the most preferred destination for Dagestani migrants (Eldarov et al. 2007). According to the 2010 All Russian census, there were 49,302 Dargins officially living in Stavropol *Kray*, compared to 490,384 listed in Dagestan.

Work by Holland and O'Loughlin (2010) found that Dagestanis in general tend to have a stronger identification with their ethno-national groups than that exhibited by other groups in the

wider North Caucasus region. In addition, previous studies on ethno-national socio-territorial dynamics and ethnic relations have indicated that Dargins are among the least likely of any of the ethno-national groups in the North Caucasus to associate with members of other groups, and that sentiment among Dargins to have their own autonomous territory is strong (Kolossov and O'Loughlin 2009). The fact that Dargins are culturally and economically aware and expressive of their ethno-national identity has been a point of contention among ethnic Russian populations in eastern Stavropol *Kray*, as their increasing influx into this area has sought to strengthen ties, influence, and interests of Dargin groups in Daegstan into Stavropol (Ioffe et al. 2014).

The Nogays are a Turkic group that has historically inhabited the Russian Steppe, consisting of contemporary Stavropol *Kray* and its surrounding territories. Nogays can date their national roots back to around 1400 and are believed to be descended from the Golden Horde, thus reflecting a great history of horsemanship and semi-pastoralist or nomadic cultural that is celebrated in contemporary Nogay identity (these elements are displayed prominently at the Nogay National museum in Karachay-Cherkessia). Islam is the majority religion among Nogays, as tends to be the case regarding Turkic peoples. Nogays number 22,006 in Stavropol *Kray*, with another 15,654 in Karachay-Cherkessia and 40,407 in Dagestan, according to the 2010 census.

Because Nogays' 'ethnic' territory consists of parts of Dagestan, Stavropol *Kray*, Karachay-Cherkessia and Astrakhan *Oblast*, and there have been calls from Nogay nationalist leaders to unify this territory under a central Nogay-based authority (Anchabadze, 1993). Such desires can be observed with the formation of a political movement called "Unity" (*Birlik*) that advocated for territorial autonomy for Nogays from Stavropol *Kray* and Karachay-Cherkessia. Calls for division of Nogays from Dagestan have also come about, as they form the majority

population in Dagestan's most northeastern areas, which border areas with established Nogay populations in eastern Stavropol *Kray* (Holland and O'Loughlin, 2010). Many territorial discontents among Nogays stem from the fact that their lack of titular status in any of Russia's *Krays* or republics has meant that they have suffered environmental discrimination, as exemplified by the location of a water treatment plant located among majority Nogay population in Karachay-Cherkessia (Richmond, 2008). Conflicts between Nogays and Dargins in eastern Stavropol *Kray* and in western Dagestan have also been noted recently (Foxall, 2012).

In regard to Russia as a whole, scholars who study demographic trends and patterns have tended to focus on population decline (Heleniak, 2006 and Kohler and Kohler, 2002). However, population dynamics in Stavropol and the rest of the North Caucasus region have trended to exhibit overall growth. The City of Stavropol's official population is 355,066, according to the 2010 Russian census and the city is growing. The 2002 census reported the city's population at 354,867 and the 1989 census at 318,298. While the number of people living in Stavropol is increasing, overall gains in total population have not reflected even growth dynamics among its various ethno-national groups. Current trends indicate that ethnic Russians, who typically exhibit a low rate of natural increase, are actually migrating out of the area, while non-Russian populations, which tend to have higher rates of natural increase, are migrating into Stavropol *Kray* from the republics located directly to its south.

The ethnic Russian population in the North Caucasus Republics began to decline in the 1960s, as ethnic Russians migrated to Stavropol and Rostov-on-Don, a trend that picked up quickly after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Belozorov, 2000). Unlike Stavropol *Kray,* the various republics of the North Caucasus (Karachay-Cherkessia, Chechnya, Kabardino-Balkaria, Dagestan, etc.) operate with autonomous status from Moscow. These territories are majority

non-Russian, have separate constitutes in addition to the Russia's Federal Constitution, and have official languages besides Russian. However, these territories also tend to be economically disadvantaged. Therefore, Stavropol is an attractive destination for migrants from the republics because of its good climatic and environmental conditions. Some have argued that Stavropol has begun to play a "gathering role" for the diverse population of the North Caucasus and constitutes a "closed migration region" given that migrants are coming to Stavropol *Kray* primarily from the republics and not from other regions of Russia (Mkrtchian, 1997). While this trend has made Stavropol *Kray* more ethnically diverse, the opposite is happening in the North Caucasus republics. As Belezerov (2005) has demonstrated, as Russians leave the North Caucasus, ethnic populations in the republics tend to become increasingly homogenous, even when multiple non-Russian nationalities occupy the same territories.

While many people have chosen to come to Stavropol, not all such decisions are made voluntarily, as Stavropol has been a destination for migrants forced from their homes due to violence. In 2000, Stavropol's governor claimed that there were upwards of 500,000 forced migrants in the region (Riazantsev, 2003). The villages to the north of Stavropol also received some refugees from North Ossetia, after the conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008. Documentation of these and other migrants has been poor at times, resulting in the tendency for Stavropol locals to quote their city's population at half a million as its abundance of people, and migrants especially, obviously reflects a number much higher than the census's stated 355,066. Large numbers of undocumented people and refugees, many of whom are unable to work, is potentially worrisome for Stavropol's economic potential. While the North Caucasus has traditionally been considered an area with a labor surplus, a study by Rizantsev (2003) argues that projected population dynamics could threaten the region's economic security because the

amount of children has decreased, and death rates among able bodied individuals has increased. Additionally, an increase in migrants generally means an increase in unemployment for Stavropol *Kray*, to the tune of 0.2 percent for a 1 percent increase in the number of migrants received (Riazantsev, 2003). While such predictions are surely a source of pessimism for some, inequality among Russia's regions has served as a pull factor for younger people, especially ethnic Russians, toward presumably brighter futures in Moscow (Ioffe and Zayonchkovskaya, 2010).

With the overall number of Russians in the North Caucasus declining, O'Loughlin et al. (2007) describe current trends as the 'de-Russificiation' of the North Caucasus, citing its beginning in the late Soviet period. According to the 2010 census, Russians constituted 80.9 percent of Stavropol *Kray's* population, but numbers from the late Soviet period reflect Russian outflow, as from 1979 to 1989, the Russian population of Stavropol *Kray* decreased from 87.8 to 84 percent. The city's population, 91.5 percent of which was comprised of ethnic Russians in 1979, is now 88.7 percent Russian, as indicated by the 2010 census. The only significant in migration of Slavs into Stavropol has come via Russians migrating out of the Republics, but when faced with a choice to migrate, many Russians see leaving the region in general as a preferable decision, thus choosing to relocate to the larger cities in Central Russia, Moscow in particular (Belozerov, 2000; Ianchenkov, 2000).

Russia's Post-Soviet Ethno-Federalism

Russia essentially retained the ethno-federal system from the Soviets, thus its provincial subjects are territories are under the authority of the federal center, and are delineated based on the allocation of territory to particular ethno-national groups. As was the case with the Soviets,

certain types of territory are afforded varying degrees of autonomy from the federal center, according to their territorial statuses. Nearly one-third of Russia's federal territories are ethnically defined, having some type of advanced autonomous status or recognition.

There are six types of federal territories (provincial scale) in contemporary Russia: *oblasts*, *krays*, federal cities, republics (autonomous republics), autonomous *okrugs* and autonomous *oblasts*. *Oblasts*, *krays*, and federal cities tend to be majority ethnic Russian and are granted the least amount of autonomy. Stavropol *Kray* remains a majority Russian and fall under Moscow's direct authority. However, the republics that border Stavropol *Kray* are majority non-Russian populated territories, locally administered with some special freedoms not granted to *oblasts*, *krays*, and federal cities. According Russia's constitution, the local populations of these territories are allowed official languages other than Russian, the establishment of their own legal codes, separate constitutions, and named ethno-national (titular) recognition and status.[4] However, it is important to note that, although republics have special ethno-national status, they are not homogenous.

The changing policy on issues of nationality in Russia, along with the associated territorial implications connected to national territory, population dynamics, and administration, have been an important topics for geographers focusing on Russia since its independence (see Kaiser, 1994), and policy and discourse on nationalities has proven important for state-craft, identity-building, and authority, all of which have direct effects on the geographies of the Russian Federation and on the North Caucasus especially. In each historical version of Russian nationalities policy, an important geopolitical theme becomes evident: contextualized identity building and territorial divisions in accordance with the state's goals for stability and

[4] Article 63 of the constitution of the Russian Federation

governance. In each case, Stavropol and the North Caucasus have been directly affected when state identity paradigms have shifted. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, followed by the transition of Yeltsin to Putin-era internal geopolitics along with the Putin administration's recent focus on unity, conservation, and consolidation, particularly in respect to "vertical power" and "federal district reform," represent the most recent of these paradigm shifts.

Changes in identity-building strategy can be tracked on the North Caucasus's landscape in a number of ways, notably in shifts from military to finance after two major conflicts in Chechnya, region-wide issues with security and terrorism, the emergence of ethno-political separatist groups, federal subsidies for republics, top-down economic development strategies for the region, and instability across Russia's southern border with Georgia, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. Promoting notions of an inclusive civic Russian identity have been suggested and encouraged from a number of scholars and politicians as a way to create unity without aggravating rifts and discontinuities among competing identities and solving the Soviets old nemesis, "The National Question," in contemporary Russia. Tishkov (1996; 1997) argues that the only way toward establishing ethno-national stability in Russia and the other former Soviet states is to create a dualistic situation where civic and ethnic identity are separated; such a situation is created through gradual "de-ethnization" of the state, coupled with "de-politicized" conceptions of ethnicity.

While similar ideas have been promoted in post-Soviet Russia, completely uncoupling ethnicity and territory, or creating a situation where every citizen of Russia is treated as an equal in every Russian territory seems rather unfeasible. Many consider that Soviet-style institutionalized ethnicity continues to dominate identity perceptions post-Soviet public consciousness and political practices, which leads to ethnic discrimination, racism and

xenophobia (Popov and Kuznetsov, 2008). Part of the reason such notions are so hard to kill could reside in the fact that mobilizing national sentiments to achieve territorial goals in post-Soviet space has proven to be rather easy and affective for elites. According to Vladimir Kolossov (1999, p. 80):

> The political control over a geographical space is the main opportunity to realize nationalist aspirations as a political program. The nationalist perception of a territorial identity with the soil of one's ancestors as the place which belongs only to the members of the nation, and which is the only place where its historical destiny can be fulfilled, is being transformed into a feeling of national exclusiveness.

Such selective identities, when manifested in territorial identities, can lead to competition or even conflict between territories. Kolossov (1999) suggests that the places in Russia where conflicting identities exist become problematic when these subjective ideas are combined with objective material factors, most notably blatant economic inequalities between and among adjacent territories. Stavropol and its ethnic dynamics and status as a *Kray* represent inequalities in relation to its neighboring republics.

In addition, divides along religious ranks have a similar destabilizing potential. Research on ethnicity in the North Caucasus has noted connections with religion (Yemelianova, 2005; Gammer, 2007). Due to ethno-national claims on defined territories, religious claims along the same lines are also a possibility if breaks in Orthodox Christian and Islamic space are imagined along clear territorial borders. For example, ideas of a North Caucasus Emirate, such as those promoted by Islamist leader Doku Amarov, suggest the territorial unity of the North Caucasus republics under the banner of Islam and separate from Christian Russia (Kuchins et al. 2011).

Issues of interethnic relations in Stavropol and the North Caucasus tend to be dealt with by local and federal authorities as a state security issues, rather than problems that can be solved via democratic politics (Wæver, 1995). Such tactics and policy works to send the message that

state-power is the clear way to achieve stability. Thus, management of multi-ethnic relations in Russia is achieved through the 'securitization of interethnic relations' (Popov and Kuznetsov, 2008). As a result, public perceptions of contested identities and resistance of Russian dominance, along with connections to the North Caucasus as a typical context for these security threats, has worked discursively to promote distrust and even the 'demonization' of non-Russians among ethnic Russian communities (Foxall, 2010). Schenk (2012) argues that the Russian government and print media used ethnic conflict in Stavropol, which took place in 2007, to form and disseminate nationalist ideas; although the official policies of the Russian Federation promote an inclusive multicultural strategy, media, which is basically loyal to Moscow (see FAPMCRF, 2005[5]), tended to sensationalize events related to the Stavropol riots in a way that presented nationalist-friendly facts. This discursive hypocrisy ends up working against official policy of ethno-national unification under a civic-Russian civic, working to reinforce connections between ethnic Russians' belonging to the Russian state.

Bad press, with subjects like Stavropol at the center, are definitely commonplace among Russian media outlets, and negative events throughout the North Caucasus rarely go unnoticed. This kind of publicity has a potentially negative impact on tolerance in Russia overall. Studies conducted by the SOVA Center have suggested the presence of grand scale xenophobic tendencies among ethnic Russians, whereby as many as 50 percent believe that ethnic Russians should have privileges over non-Russians and that non-Russians should have limited freedom in *krays* and *oblasts*, or even be removed from said territories (Harding, 2009; Gudkov, 2008). However, as indicated by a study by Bakke et al. (2009), opinions about ethno-federalism did not significant differences among ethnically defined regions, suggesting that populations in Russian

[5] FAPMCRF (Federal Agency for the Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation). Russian Periodical Press Market: Situation, Trends and Prospects. May 2005.

areas support autonomy for non-Russian groups with specially defined territories at these groups themselves.

In light of the Soviet legacy and the fact that most of the Russian population seems not to challenge the utility of ethno-federalism, many Russian elites and politicians have demonstrated their belief in the idea that ethno-national identity is a choice, whose markers are based on socially constructed sets of characteristics that are fluid and malleable, changing over time and becoming more or less salient as social circumstances change (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983; Thompson, 1989; Tishkov 1997). As Kolossov et al. (2003) suggest, identity in the North Caucasus is:

> not only a constantly changing set of social attitudes and myths but also the outgrowth of contest among various elites, state institutions and local administrations trying to 'sell' their cultural markers as best that can and to obtain control of those markers that have become popular.

Such ideas seem applicable not only for local elites, but for the state itself, as evidenced through Russia post-Yeltsin era federal reforms and nationalities policies. Based on the legacy of Soviet hierarchy, Stavropol's ethnic Russian community could see themselves as part of the North Caucasus, maybe even before being part of Russia, or vice versa. Recently policy suggests that Moscow would like to see a peacefully homogenized understanding of the North Caucasus, Stavropol included, which understands its integrated role within the whole of the Russian Federation. However, the realization of this desire is contingent on the local population ascribing the correct markers of identity in the correct territorial fashion.

Federal District Reform, Regional Consolidation, and the State's Ethnic Russian Agenda

Vladimir Putin has proven to be a Russian leader with an active agenda for statecraft that has taken a particular focus on the North Caucasus (Taylor, 2007). With the election of Putin

and his United Russia party to an unprecedented third term as president, it seems that Russia wants stability and is willing to see its leaders strive toward such a goal through the modification of old ideas, specifically a reworking of Russia's internal territorial structure and ethno-national politics. Evidence of United Russia's agenda can be seen via the party's emphasis on "vertical power," "federal district reform," and the drafting of a new official state policy on "Nationalities[6]" (Pomeranz, 2009; Hahn, 2003). These policies, all of which involve formalizing markers of identity in regard to territory, nationality, or possibly both, set the foundation on which power continues to be distributed in Russia to this day, promoting the idea of inclusivity and exclusivity of certain territories for certain national groups.

Contemporary Russia has indeed been left to deal with the lingering effects of Soviet-era identify building, where a desired focus on citizenship within the Russian federal state is the ultimate goal. However, Russia has had to make a scalar concession to this strategy through the promotion of a homogeneous North Caucasus regional identity, which according to the new nationalities policy should fit into the narrative of a civic-Russian nation.[7] Instead of being left with "Russia" at a federal scale as the main inclusive identity marker for the various for the various ethno-national groups of the North Caucasus to draw on collectively, formalizing a North Caucasus regional identity could provide these groups a more localized and tangible marker with which to collectively association. Therefore, constructing a meaningful regional scale of identity, which operates with a vertical framework of power, would constitute a less removed territorial authority with which North Caucasus residents could identify, while at the same time allowing centralized policies to be more efficiently implemented. Regional centralization and

[6] Ukaz Prezidenta RF 1666. O Strategii gosudarstvennoi' natsional'noi' politiki Rossii'skoi' Federatsii na period do 2025 god. Moscow, Russia

[7] "Putin in Annual Address Denounces Foreign Meddling." http://www.rferl.org/content/putin-annual-address-denounces-foreign-meddling/24796193.html. 12/12/12

the implementation of vertical power, in said fashion, have arguably been two cornerstones of governance and territoriality in post-Yeltsin Russia. Although these policies have been criticized for their unequal treatment of the state's federal core and periphery (Ross, 2003), they have undoubtedly played a role in defining and constructing contemporary notions of Russia's regions. Relations among the Russian core (Moscow) and the state's peripheries are central to governance within Russia's federal structure, and some have theorized that in order to maintain control and stability, Moscow must control the extent to which regionalisms are allowed to become salient (Nunn and Stulberg, 2000). Therefore, Russia seeks to promote controlled regionalization, not regionalism, where the people of a given region understand identify within Russia while functioning as a regional entity integrated into the federal whole.

Moscow has shown great willingness to devote attention to and become deeply involved fiscally and militarily in the North Caucasus (O'Loughlin et al. 2007). This allocation of financial resources (subsidies) from the federal center to the region demonstrates concern for the region. The state's readiness to become involved militarily reveals its desire, and perceived necessity, to preserve its territorial integrity and control its southern border in order to avoid, as suggested in the new nationalities policies: "disintegration."[8]

All of Moscow's interest has, to this end, led to an unstable political geography throughout the greater Caucasus region, where the population has seen conflict, territorial and political reorganization, and the creation new international territories. Yet, despite all of these changes, a regional notion is always supported, prompting the geopolitical question of why the North Caucasus needs to exist as an integrated Russian territorial entity. Interestingly, the case of the North Caucasus seems to run contrary to the common contemporary Russian territorial

[8] Ukaz Prezidenta RF 1666. O Strategii gosudarstvennoi' natsional'noi' politiki Rossii'skoi' Federatsii na period do 2025 god. Moscow, Russia

strategies of centralization and consolidation in that the region is being uniquely defined and singled out rather than brought into a greater umbrella territory.

Evidence for such a strategy can be seen in the reordering of territorial units and positions of governance since the early 2000s. In accordance with Putin's visions of vertical power, provincial governors are appointed, rather than elected, and federal districts (*federalnye okrugy*) have emerged as officially defined regional entities. Through federal districts, United Russia has implemented regionally-based strategies for economic development, defense and security operations, and various other forms of federal subsidization, all facilitated through direct territorial reorganization. Thus, emphasis for relations between a particular province and the federal center must now be directed through its given federal district's "fully empowered representative" (*polpred*). Functionally, provincial governors must operate within their various regional contexts, and economically, provinces have become involved in federally supported economic plans. Putin's reorganization strategy has resulted in increased emphasis on regional identification, where regions function as integrated entities in relation to the federal center, with the ultimate intention being that regions collectively understand their role as part of an integrated Russian federal whole (Chebankova, 2008). Due to their integration and participation in the greater Russian economy, federal districts are reified and attain institutional shape (Paasi, 2003), as constituted via their relations with Moscow.

In January, 2010, Moscow took a step to promote its definition of the North Caucasus with the creation of the North Caucasus Federal District, essentially splitting its "Southern Federal District" in half. Many have speculated as to why Russia made this division, and also about which territories remained as parts of the Southern Federal District and which ones became part of the North Caucasus Federal District. Empirical observations suggest that physical

boundaries and landmarks related to the Caucasus Mountains played little part it this event. Rather, it would seem that areas that have been plagued with various, and well-publicized, security-related problems were grouped together as North Caucasus, while territories that had been stable remained within the Southern Federal District. This division perhaps points to a greater geopolitical strategy where the North Caucasus gets special attention from within, and buffers Russia-proper from certain threats outside, such as the spread of radicalized Islam. This separation of federal districts is particularly interesting because constitutes an instance of formal regional disintegration, which runs contrary to both Soviet and Yeltsin-ear consolidation.

Debates over the formation of the North Caucasus Federal District involved Stavropol specifically, as it was the only *kray*, or majority ethnic Russian territory included in the new district. In addition, the North Caucasus Federal District capital was placed in Pyatigorsk, not Stavropol. Speculation as to the motivation behind Stavropol's situation has ranged from abandonment, to development opportunities, to even a 'civilizing role' for Stavropol to play in connection to the republics, similar to its original founding purpose in the imperial era. A major goal of this project is to test whether Stavropol's Caucasus identity is consistent among its local population and to gain insights into how regional identity markers are understood according to territory.

Finally, there remains the issue of ethno-national territory and autonomy within Russia's federal structure. Russia's new nationalities policy lays out Moscow's legal approach to the ever-present "National Question." The new plan, signed into to law by president Putin on December 19, 2012, is in effect until 2025[9] and replaces the previous state policy, which was

[9] Ukaz Prezidenta RF 1666. O Strategii gosudarstvennoi' natsional'noi' politiki Rossii'skoi' Federatsii na period do 2025 god. Moscow, Russia

held since 1996. Several motivations behind the changes are cited in the document itself, implicitly pointing to the North Caucasus, criticizing the region's role within the Greater (Federal) Russia. According to the four advisors who drafted the order:

> negative factors conditioned by Soviet nationality policy and the weakening of statehood in the 1990s … subsequently leading to "an outburst of ethnic mobilization, ethno-territorial separatism, and religious-political extremism." They go on to state that Russia faces a "the threat of disintegration," which they suggest has come about due to "a high level of social inequality in society and regional differentiation, ethno-politicization of various spheres of life…" along with "corruption, failings of the law-enforcement system, and the distrust of citizens in the organs of power.[10]

New policies like this one seem to be understood as more of the same. The state's attempts at identity-building in Stavropol and the North Caucasus attempts to satisfy social interests of ethno-national groups and optimize their competition, neutralize their contested resources and prevent factors of conflict, which is done by modernizing management strategies and stabilizing policy on the base of traditional Russian historical-cultural values (Astvatsaturova and Chekmenev, 2013). With the emphasis seemingly placed on ethnic Russian characteristics for a universalizing identity with the Russian Federation, how people in a contested region like Stavropol view their own associations with territory at different scales, the extent and prevalence of their identity markers, and the cohesiveness of group opinions, may indicate whether the state's definitions of region and identity are accepted by its population.

The aforementioned policies and actions have no doubt some effect on how the population in the North Caucasus is forced to conceptualize regional, state-level, and local markers of identity. While it would seem that policies such as vertical power, ethno-federalism, and federal district reform are designed to work toward a more cohesive understand of identity,

[10] Ukaz Prezidenta RF 1666. O Strategii gosudarstvennoi' natsional'noi' politiki Rossii'skoi' Federatsii na period do 2025 god. Moscow, Russia

that presumably would promote social and economic stability in the North Caucasus, thus easing tensions for the Russian Federal center, it is perhaps necessary to conduct empirical research to gain insights into how the people in the North Caucasus understand various markers of identity, and their meanings in scalar context. In the next chapter, I will explain my methodology and the data analysis I used to gain insight from participants in the North Caucasus to further address these issues.

Chapter IV: Methodology and Data

In order to examine how people perceive the importance of identity markers in regional context, I used a methodological approach that combines quantitative, qualitative, and cartographic techniques, which allowed me to test whether or not participants' association with the "North Caucasus" as a region serves as an important marker of identity compared to other place-based and socio-cultural identity markers. This methodological approach also provided me with insights from participants in regard to their perceptions of constructive regionalization via state policies and outcomes designed to influence governance, development, and geopolitical strategy, specifically involving the North Caucasus. I chose to incorporate a mixed methodology due to the complex nature of identity in general and because of the unique challenges associated with regions such as the North Caucasus, where a melding of national identities with socialist and post-socialist political platforms has occurred (O'Lear and Whiting, 2008). I felt as though a mixed methodology, which is based on analysis of both quantitative and qualitative empirical data sources, was appropriate for dealing with complex issues like identity, as the methodology has the ability to identify trends within the population, and also attempt to offer explanations as to why various trends may, or may not have been present in the dataset. Through this methodological platform, I was able to collect and analyze empirical data, gathered via surveys, interviews, and a participatory mapping exercise, from 488 individuals from the study area. All of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 35, and were living in the study area either as students or as full time residents. I designed the methodology of this project to examine four research questions, as stated in Chapter I**:**

Research Question 1: How do people in the North Caucasus recognize and define this region?

1a: Do participants have a cohesive understanding of their region territorially, or do different socio-cultural groups disagree on the boundaries and sub-territories that should be included in its definition?

1b: Do participants recognize the North Caucasus as a unique region, fundamentally different than the rest of Russia?

1c: Do participants recognize specific places (cities) as identity markers, based on association with the North Caucasus?

Research Question 2: How strongly do participants associate with specifically defined territorial (Ethno-Federal) constructions as identity markers: Russian Federation, Federal District, *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic?

2a: Are there significant differences regarding how strongly various socio-cultural groups associate with these territory-based identity markers?

2b: Do participants respect official state territorial guarantees and borders based on titular-status (autonomous ethno-national rights) when associating group salience with territory?

Research Question 3: How are issues of civic-nationalism and associations with civic and ethnic Russian culture viewed in the North Caucasus?

3a: How strongly do people in the North Caucasus associate with socio-cultural identity markers (ethno-national group, citizenship in the Russian Federation, religious affiliation, gender, and urbanization) and are there significant differences among group opinions?

3b: Is the North Caucasus region perceived to be changing in terms of its civic Russianness? Is the North Caucasus becoming more or less culturally Russian?

3c: Do ethnic Russians in the North Caucasus have a regional identity variation of a state-bearing nation (Brubaker, 1995)? Do they understand dynamics of the North Caucasus in terms of a state-bearing Russian identity?

Research Question 4: How do people in the North Caucasus view state policies aimed at constructive regionalization?

4a: How do participants regard ethno-federal governance and the state's efforts to re-scale the North Caucasus through Federal District Reform?

4b: Do participants see Stavropol *Kray* as different from other territories in the North Caucasus, and if so, how?

4c: How do participants view the North Caucasus as compared to other regions of Russia, or in terms of its relationship with the federal center?

The survey data, participatory mapping data, and interview data I collected provided insight into how the participants conceptualized group identity factors in the context of the North Caucasus. To conduct the first part of the methodology, I analyzed qualitative data gathered from surveys to demonstrate whether statistically significant differences existed among the opinions of various groups, within the local population (independent group identity variables such as language, ethno-national status, religion, etc.) in terms of these groups' propensity to associate with a number of identity-forming factors (dependent variables). These factors included regional, civic, place-based, ethno-cultural and gendered markers of identity, such as associations to certain territories, or feelings of affiliation and importance toward factors like citizenship, or religion. These data were important for addressing Research Questions 2 and 3, as I was able to utilize them determine which markers of identity were most important to which groups, and how closely the various groups agreed on the importance of said markers. In addition, I collected data regarding specific places (cities) that the participants considered to most embody notions of the North Caucasus in order to measure consensus of certain places as being understood as representing the region in terms of collective identity, which was helpful for Research Question 1.

Next, through a Geographic Information Systems (GIS)-based participatory mapping exercise, I was able to gather visual representations of participants' perceptions in regard to the spatial manifestations (on maps) of the wider North Caucasus region. These collaborative insights shed light on how various independent variable groups viewed the North Caucasus in a

territorial sense, and where in the region the groups perceived their territorial salience to be located, detecting potential cultural and social cleavages and contested power relations. The analysis of these data was critical for addressing Research Question 1.

The third component of this data collection consisted of oral interviews, which I conducted personally with 39 research participants, all of whom had taken part in the surveys and participatory mapping exercise. These interviews allowed the participants to freely explain how their personal conceptions of identity are articulated. I also asked each participant to give his or her opinion in regard to a series of questions on political policies of regionalization in the North Caucasus, according to the participants' lived experience. I analyzed all of the interview responses through a coding scheme, "Human Preset Coding for Response-Based Messages," to get a further sense of the trends and narratives that exist in the study area from the participants themselves. I also relied on interview data to provide qualitative support and explanation for the quantitative trends uncovered through the survey and mapping portions of this project. Analysis of qualitative interview data was particularly important for addressing Research Questions 3 and 4, and for providing explanatory and anecdotal evidence for Questions 1 and 2.

The Datasets and Data Collection

During May, June and July of 2013 (HSCL#20847), I collected surveys and cognitive map data from 488 individuals in Russia (See Appendix A), specifically from Stavropol and other cities in Stavropol *Kray*, as well as from several cities in Karachay-Cherkessia. The first part of my data collection strategy relied on a survey, which was aimed at gathering biographical data from each participant. This information would be useful for analysis and identification throughout this project. Participants were free to provide any information they chose, or skip certain aspects of the survey they were not comfortable with, or if they were unwilling to provide

certain information. Along with the surveys, participants received four maps of the study area, with each map containing instructions on how to indicate their personal view of the territorial prevalence of a particular factor of identity. In addition, 39 of the participants agreed to conduct oral interviews with me after completing the survey sand maps. Participants' materials (surveys, maps and interview recordings), were numbered, scanned and logged electronically for later data input. Interview recordings were translated and transcribed. After transcription, the recordings were deleted, per Human Subjects Committee of Lawrence policies of participant anonymity.

Sampling Methods

To collect the data for this project, I relied on a widely used technique called "snowballing" or "referral sampling." This technique has been cited as a particularly effective way to gather survey data in Russia and other countries in Europe and the Former Soviet Union (Rivera, Kozyreva, and Sarovskii, 2002); Carnaghan, 2010; Harvey, 2010). Snowballing relies on a researcher's personal contacts, through which new contacts are established and lobbied to participate in the project. Therefore, research participants refer new participants, establishing credibility and familiarity between the interviewer and subjects. Establishing this kind of basic trust is especially important in Russia, where people tend to be suspicious of foreigners and surveys asking demographically-based questions (Rivera, Kozyreva, and Sarovskii, 2002). I also utilized a technique called "convenience sampling," another effective method for selecting survey participants (Bradshaw and Stratford, 2000) and (Özdemir et al. 2011), which involves soliciting participants from public parks and gathering places within a given study area.

To gather data, I relied on a base of contacts that consisted of friends, former work colleagues and acquaintances I had gained through my previous experience in the North

Caucasus. I had several contacts at the Stavropol Ministry of Education who agreed to help me find participants for this research. These contacts led to professors and administrators at Russian State Social University and Stavropol College of Construction, both of which allowed me access to their campuses to talk to students. I chose to work specifically with these institutions because their student populations were very diverse, consisting of individuals from all of the North Caucasus's various ethno-national groups, and from varied religious backgrounds. Such individuals constituted my target participant population, having come to Stavropol from throughout Stavropol *Kray* and the surrounding territories, including the North Caucasus' many autonomous republics. I met with contacts at both of these institutions on several occasions and was able to collect 378 surveys and 19 interviews in the process. However, I could not use some of these surveys, as they were completed by individuals outside of the target age group, notably staff and faculty members who were interested in the project.

I was able to collect the rest of my surveys and interviews through contacts I established via friends and acquaintances that I had in Stavropol, as well as in villages and cities around Stavropol, and in republic of Karachay-Cherkessia. I gathered an additional 130 surveys and conducted an additional 20 interviews through my established contacts and through new contacts that were referred to me. I collected data from a total of 508 participants, 488 of whom met the demographic requirements for the study group. Thus, the responses from these 488 participants are included in this project. Specific sites for data collection included Stavropol, Mikhalovsk, Svetlograd, Kugalta, Izabilni, Ipatovo, Alexandrovskaya, Kislovodsk and Pyatigorsk in Stavropol *Kray*. Data collection sites in Karachay-Cherkessia included Cherkessk, the Nogay Autonomous District, Karachaevsk and Teberda.

Survey Data

The survey began by asking each participant to list his or her ethno-national group (*natsionalnost*). Knowing how the survey participants defined their ethno-national identities was a critical step for approaching each of the research questions in this project. This prompt on the survey was open ended, as participants were asked to write their entries on a blank line. In total, 22 different ethno-national groups were listed, with Russians (N=399) being the most well represented (see Table 4.1). After listing their ethno-national groups, participants were asked to self-evaluate as to whether or not they practiced cultural traditions associated with their ethno-national group by selecting "yes," or "no." The purpose of asking this question was to gauge whether each participant felt personally engaged in his or her ethno-national group in terms of practice rather than by association. Participants were also asked to disclose whether their parents were both of the same nationality so as to tell whether the participants' sense of ethno-national identity would possibly be conflicted between, or among ethno-national groups based on personal heritage.

Table 4.1 – Ethno-National Groups and Percentages

Ethno-National Groups (Self-Identified)	**Dataset Percentage**	**2010 Census Percentage (Stavropol *Kray*)**
Armenian (N=31)	6.4	5.9
Avar (N=2)	0.4	0.3
Azeri (N=1)	0.2	*
Belarussian (N=1)	0.2	0.3
Chechen (N=2)	0.4	0.4
Cherkess (N=2)	0.4	*
Dargin (N=8)	1.6	1.8
Greek (N=2)	0.4	1.2
Ingush (N=6)	1.2	*
Jewish (*Yevrey*) (N=1)	0.2	*
Karachay (N=8)	1.6	0.6
Korean (N=1)	0.2	0.2
Kalmyk (N=1)	0.2	*
Lak (N=1)	0.2	*
Lezgin (N=4)	0.8	*

Moldovan (N=1)	0.2	*
Nogay (N=6)	1.2	0.8
Russian (N=399)	81.8	80.9
Tabasarian (N=1)	0.2	*
Tatar (N=6)	1.2	0.4
Udmurt (N=1)	0.2	*
Uzbek (N=3)	0.6	*

*Not indicated in 2010 All Russian Census

The next pieces of biographical data involved participants' places of birth and residence. Each participant was asked to provide his or her place of birth, via fill-in-the-blank format. Participants were then asked to self-evaluate as to whether they had grown up in the place where they were born by circling "yes" or "no." If a participant circled "no," he or she was prompted to write in a place where he or she had grown up. Finally, the participants were instructed to provide their current living place on another blank line, along with how many years they had been living there. By asking participants to provide this information, I was able to determine whether or not they had spent their entire lives in the study area, or whether they had migrated to the North Caucasus. I was also able to get some indication as to whether they had undergone intraregional migrations within the study area, or had emigrated from other former Soviet states. Because each of my four research questions hinged upon gathering opinions from participants with personal familiarity and lived experience within the study area, this information was important in determining whether participants fit the target demographic applicable to the research. If participants had not arrived in the study area within the past two years from the time of data collection, their response data were not included in the data set.

Out of all 488 participants, 29 were born in former Soviet Republics other than Russia, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Belarus. Only 3 of these individuals had arrived in the study area within the past two years. 19 participants had

undergone an interregional migration and were now living in the study area, having been born in another region of Russia, and seven of them had arrived within the past two years. Some of these participants' birthplaces included Moscow, Chelyabinsk, Magadan, Arkhangelsk, Tula, Bryansk, Irkutsk, Tomsk and Voronezh. 210 participants had undergone an intraregional migration, moving within the study area at some point in their lives. The remaining 230 participants currently lived in the same city or village where they were born. While participants tended to come from Stavropol and the surrounding cities and villages, my sampling methods yielded many responses from people throughout Stavropol *Kray* and the wider study area (see Figure 4.1).

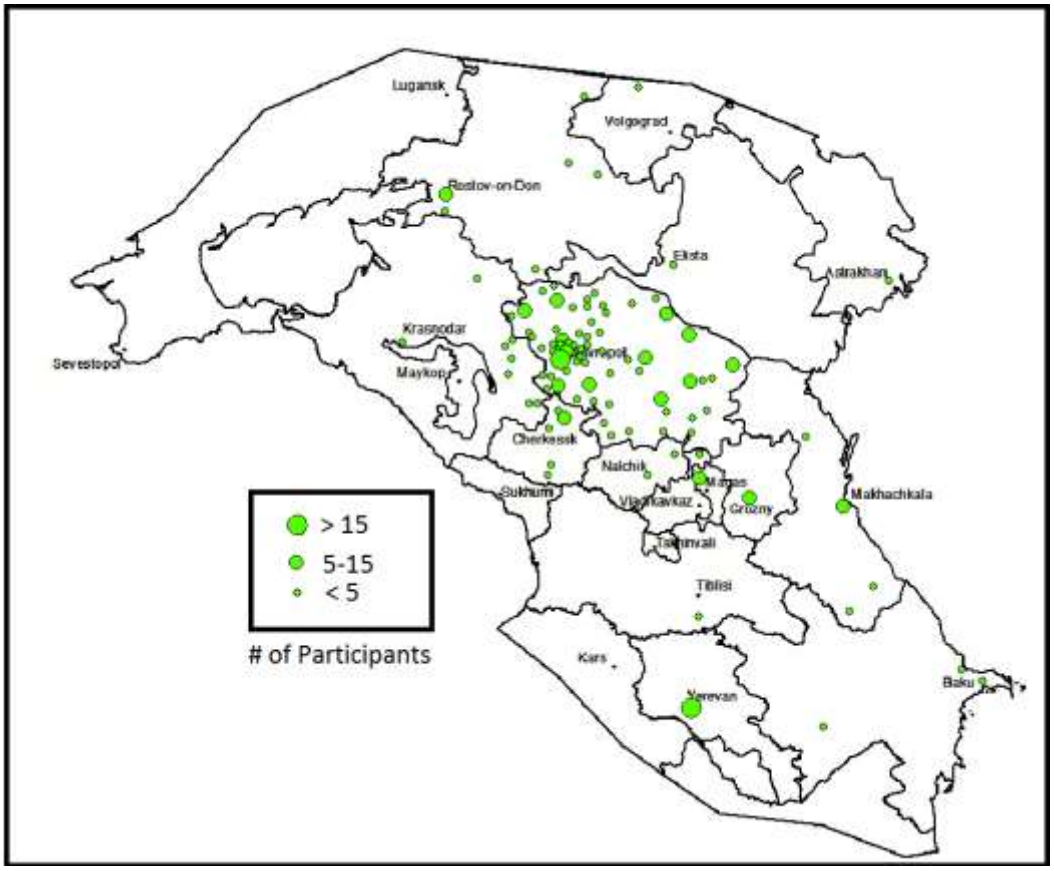

Figure 4.1 – Map of Participants' Birthplaces within the Study Area (N=455)

The survey then asked participants to identify their age and gender. Both of these sections were open ended. The purpose of asking participants' ages was to make certain that

they fell within the target ages for this project, 18-35. Gender was purposely asked as a fill in the blank to account for the fact that participants may represent a wide spectrum of gender identities. However, "female" (N=307) and "male" (N=181) were the only two answers provided. It should be noted that this data set features a disproportionate amount of female to male participantipants, as compared to the demopraphics reported for Stavropol Kray in the 2010 All Russian Census. According to the 2010 Census, Stavropol Kray's total population was 1,607,415, with 848,758 (52.8 percent) listed as female and 758,657 (47.2 percent) as male. Gender was a category that was important to examine, particularly for Research Questions 2 and 3.

The additional biographical information I gathered relates to participants' linguistic and religious affiliations. Participants were asked to list their native language, again with a fill in the blank, and circle "yes" or "no," indicating whether their native language was also their main language of communication. Although all of the participants could speak Russian, the *lingua franca* of the region, I was interested to see whether non-Russian languages were being utilized for communication in everyday life. 417 participants indicated that their native language was Russian, while 71 identified a language other than Russian as their native tongue. The most common group to claim a non-Russian ethno-national identity and Russian as a native language were Armenians, as 11 out of 31 did so. This information was also important for exploring Research Questions 2 and 3.

Participants were also asked to state their religion, again through self-identification. They were also asked to evaluate whether they actively participated in religious activities by circling "yes," or "no." Similarly to how participants were asked to provide information about their ethno-national groups, I wanted to see whether participants considered themselves to be actively

engaged within religious communities, as opposed to having an association with these communities. Responses given for religious identity are listed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 – Religious Categories as Self-Identified by Participants

Religions
Orthodox Christianity (N=396)
Islam (N=46)
Atheist (N=9),
Baptist (N=2),
Roman Catholicism (N=1)
Judaism (N=1)
No Response (N=33)

The next part of the survey began to gather participants' perceptions of several elements of identity, both place-based, and non-place based. The participants were instructed to indicate their feelings of importance toward 10 potential factors of identity, via a 5-point Likert style scale, where a rank of "1" meant "completely unimportant," a rank of "3" indicated neutrality, and a rank of "5" meant "very important." Knowing how participants felt about these identity factors allowed me to get a sense of how strongly the factors were viewed by the various ethno-national, religious, and other identity groups, which is critical information for Research Question 2, and is also needed to explore Research Question 3.

The first 4 factors of identity that participants were asked to consider were non place-based: "ethno-national group," "native language," "religion," and "citizenship in the Russian Federation." The participants were instructed to use the aforementioned Likert scale to evaluate each factor's level of importance. I decided to measure "native language" and "religion," due to the importance of these elements to the formation of national identity in general, as indicated by established works on identity in social science (see Weber, 1922, Smith, 1986, Gellner, 1987, and Smith, 1991). Ethno-national group is also key for this study, per Brubaker (1995), who

suggests that nationalizing states, such as Russia, operate according to dynamics between state-bearing nations and the minority populations also residing within the state. The idea of citizenship is also important, according to Brubaker (1995), because elite individuals emphasize citizenship within the state, in this case civic Russianness, though the trappings of a "state-bearing nation," ethnic Russians. Measuring identification with the concept of citizenship at the federal scale is also important for examining scalar notions of citizenship (Swyngedouw, 1996). Russian citizens may or may not gravitate to an inclusive identity based on the rights and collective notions of the state, especially where state re-scaling efforts have been made. The purpose of asking participants to rank these elements of identity is to get a sense of whether or not different socially identifiable groups, whose identities are understood in terms of both cultural prevalence and Russian state-published statistics, viewed these particular factors in a stronger and weaker manor than other groups, thus providing a base line for looking at the salience of various identities in the study area. These data provided specific information that was useful for analyzing Research Questions 1d, 2a, 2b, and 3a.

The remaining 6 dependent variables in the survey were all place-based, specially asking participants to rate their level of affinity with a place, with major emphasis being on a scalar component. Participants were again asked to use a 5-point Likert Scale to identify their personal sense of territorial belonging, where "1" reflected no belonging, "3" was neutral, and "5" indicated a strong sense of belonging. The factors listed were "Russian Federation," "Participant's Federal District," "the Russian South," "the North Caucasus," "Participant's *Kray*, *Oblast*, or Republic," and "Participant's City, Village, or *Aul"* (a village in the North Caucasus republics). The goal of gathering this information was to get a general sense of how the population in the study area reached the notion of belonging at each possible territorial scale, and

to determine whether or not various groups within the general population identified more strongly with some scale, as opposed to other groups. Knowing how the various identity groups ranked their affinity for places at various scales was useful in exploring Research Question 1. Analysis of these data also helped indicate trends among groups in relation to affinity for Stavropol in particular, which was particularly important for Research Question 3b.

The survey's next section was designed with the purpose of gaining a sense of how various cities in the study area were viewed in terms of representing the North Caucasus in terms of the traditions practiced there. Participants were asked to provide three cities which they believed best exemplified the North Caucasus region as they understood it. Again, the instructions prompted participants to write down their entries on a line provided. 41 cities were listed (see Table 4.3). In addition to looking at which cities were chosen overall, I was also interested in seeing whether the cities chosen by certain ethno-national groups tended to follow ethnic lines, and whether there was any pattern related to Russian or non-Russian cities being more heavily associated with the concept of the North Caucasus Region.

Table 4.3 – Cities Selected by Participants as Best Examples of the North Caucasus and Number of Selections

City Name	**Number of Selections**
Stavropol	232
Pyatigorsk	212
Grozny	128
Makhachkala	122
Cherkessk	82
Kislovodsk	82
Nalchik	72
Vladikavkaz	56
Derbent	26
Essentuki	22
Mineralnye Vody	22
Karachaevsk	12

Georgievsk	9
Nazran	9
Neftokumsk	9
Krasnodar	8
Magaz	8
Dombay	5
Elista	4
Khasavyrt	4
Mikhailovsk	4
Nevinomyssk	4
Novoaleksandrovsk	4
Rostov	4
Budennovsk	3
Kizlyar	3
Mozdok	3
Sochi	3
Teberda	3
Armavir	2
Beslan	2
Izberbash	2
Maikop	2
Stanitsa Grogoropolisskaya	2
Zheleznovodsk	2
Yerevan	1
Ipatovo	1
Mekesh	1
Pelagiada	1
Tbilisi	1
Volgograd	1

The final part of the survey dealt with participants' perceptions in regard to the relationship between the North Caucasus, and Russia's federal center (Moscow). The data gathered from this part were important for examining research question 4, looking at the regional role in Russia's contemporary federal structure. Participants were first asked to rank the importance of Russia's federal center for the development of the North Caucasus region on a scale from 1 to 5, similar to the previous elements of the survey. The next question asked the participants to rate the importance of the North Caucasus to the federal center, using the same 1 to 5 scale of importance.

Survey Data Analysis

The first step in analysis for the survey data I collected was to categorize the participants into independent variable groups, based up on the biographical data they provided. As I previously mentioned, participants were able to identify freely with a group of their choosing in terms of ethno-national identity and religious identity (Tables 4.4 and 4.5). When analyzing and comparing these groups' overall responses, I was content to look at the overall volumes of their answers, which provided general trends and differences. However, because I wanted to be sure that differences in group identity were statistically significant, not having occurred due to random chance, I chose analysis of variance (ANOVA) to further analyze the data.

The particular test I selected to analyze the Likert-style data is called the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance, which is a non-parametric technique for determining whether or not samples originate from the same distribution which are applicable to samples of the same or different sample sizes (Kruskal and Wallis, 1952). While I had previously considered conducting a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to determine whether differences in answers

between categories were significant, I was advised to run a series of Kruskal-Wallis test for each independent variable in the study based on the nature of my dataset. Kruskal-Wallis testing has been cited as a non-parametric alternative to one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) testing, which is appropriate for comparing ranks of several independent samples (Theodorsson-Norheim, 1986). I felt as though this method for significance testing was appropriate, based on the nature of my data samples. Several of the categories in the dataset were larger than others, which would present issues with normality, and thus not allowing for a traditional ANOVA. However, since these differences were indicative of the dynamics of the actual population, the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis was an appropriate test for significance that would not require data transformations to meet assumptions of normality necessary in some other ANOVA or MANOVA methods (Breslow, 1970 and Vargha and Delaney, 1998).

I organized the data into 10 independent variable groups for the Kruskal-Wallis test with each having two binary categories (Table 4.4). The 10 factors of identity that participants were asked to rate, consisting of 4 non-place-based and 6 place-based factors constituted the dependent variables for the Kruskal-Wallis test. In addition, two more variables were included in the dependent list. These variables were from the last part of the survey, which asked participants to rank the importance of Russia's federal center to the North Caucasus and visa-versa (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.4 – List of Independent Variables and Categories for Kruskal-Wallis Testing

Independent Variables	Categories
Nationality (Ethno-National Group)	Russian (N=399) Non-Russian (N=89)
Religion (Type)	Christian (N=399) Non-Christian (N=89)

Religion (Practice)	Practicing (N=83) Not Practicing (N=406)
Gender	Male (N=181) Female (N=307)
Birthplace	Ethnic Russian Titular (N=401) Non-Russian Titular (N=87)
Family Heritage/Residence	First Generation (N=22) Multiple Generations (N=466)
Urbanization	Urban (N= 204) Rural (N=284)
Language	Russian (N=417) Non-Russian (N=71)
Titular Status	Titular (N=408) Not Titular (N=80)
Mixed-Ethnicity	Mixed (N=84) Not Mixed (N=404)

Table 4.5 – List of Dependent Variables and Categories for Kruskal-Wallis Testing

Dependent Variables
Citizenship in Russia
Ethno-National Heritage
Religion
Native Language
Russian Federal Territory
Federal Districts
North Caucasus
General Regional Description
Provincial Territories
City/Village/*Aul*
North Caucasus Importance to Federal Center
Federal Center's Importance to North Caucasus

I performed the Kruskal-Wallis tests using SPSS, which consisted of 12 one-way tests, each one testing for significance between the two categories of each independent variable, with the significance level set at 0.01 in each test. In each case, the null hypothesis for the test is that the differences in answer distributions between categories is due to random chance, and is thus not significant. However, should the test indicate a p-value (significance value) of 0.01 or less, the differences are not considered random, and thus the null hypothesis is rejected. In general, I expected to find significant difference in preference for the socio-cultural identity markers mostly between Russians and non-Russians, and between Christians and Muslims. I and expected to find significant differences in place-based markers of identity between these subsets of the population.

Participatory Mapping Data

After participants had completed the surveys, they were given a series of template maps of the study area. Each map issued instructions for participants to circle or outline the territory that they believed corresponded to a particular region or area. The purpose of the maps, and this part of the methodology, was to gain insight into how participants viewed the spatial extents of various identity markers. Map 1 asked participants to indicate where their native language was salient. Map 2 prompted the participants to indicate the areal extent of the North Caucasus region. Participants were asked to indicate the territory where their religion was salient for Map 3. Finally, Map 4 asked participants to indicate the territory where they national traditions were practiced.

Each template map included the borders of Russian sub-fedearl territories, along with international borders recognized by the Russian Federation. Major cities were also visible on each map. Borders and cities were included on the maps in order to account for participants'

varying levels of geographic literacy. Although these reference indications may have potentially guided participants to select territoriey according to border lines, approximately 70 percent of participants did not follow border lines on at least one of the four maps. The following map (Figure 4.2) is sample of a participant response for Map 2, which asked to indicate the areal extents of the North Caucasus region.

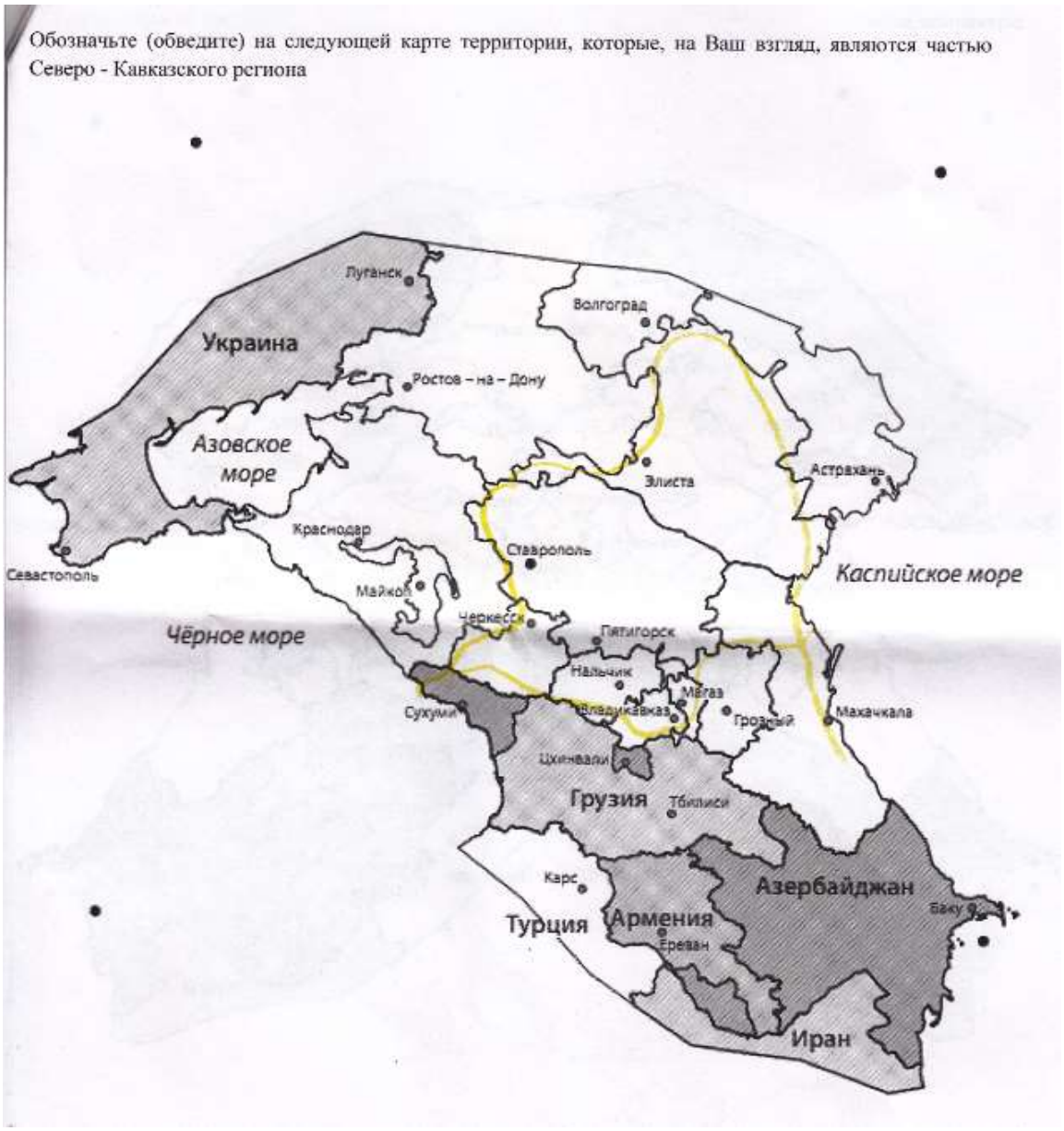

Figure 4.2 – Participant Map Showing Perceived Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region, Collected in Stavropol on June 10, 2013

I created these template maps using the program ArcMap 10.3 by ESRI. The template maps all include the borders of all *krays, oblasts,* republics, federal districts, international borders, and major cities located in the study area. Sovereign states are also differentiated via shading on all 4 maps templates. The projected coordinate system that I used to display of the template maps in this project is the "ED 1950 Turkey 15," which displayed via a Transverse Mercator projection. I chose this coordinate system and projection because it allowed me to generate what I believed was the best projection of the study area for this particular project. In total, I collected 1,944 map responses from the participants.

Analysis of Participatory Mapping Data

After collecting maps from participants, I scanned them to get digital copies to be analyzed with the program ArcMap 10.3. I then organized the maps from each participant into a catalog of files, which I built using the program ArcCatalog. The first step in converting the participants' hand-drawn data into digital data that was projected via "ED 1950 Turkey 15" was to geo-rectify the scanned images so they coordinated with this system. When I designed the templates, I included data points on each map (the dots at the corners), which served as reference points for geo-rectification process in ArcMap 10.3. I then took these same control points and loaded them into and ArcMap 10.3 document as a simple point map. After importing each participant map into ArcMap 10.3 document, I was able to use ArcMap 10.3's geo-rectification function, to align the control points and bring the participant map images into the correct projection alignment.

Upon completing geo-rectification for each map data sample, the next step was to digitize the territories selected by each participant in the form of a polygon shape file. I then went about creating polygons matching the marks that participants had made on their paper maps. The individual polygons were logged into ArcCatalog in folders for each participant. Once polygons had been created for each map response, I began to load them into new ArcMap documents (mashups). In total, I created four master ArcMap documents, one for each map variable. All of the polygons that corresponded to the various dependent variables were loaded into the master documents, according to their participant numbers.

Because the ultimate goal of this part of the project was to create visual identity maps of the 4 variables in question, corresponded to the various independent variable participant groups in the study, each polygon had to be manipulated from its default settings in ArcMap 10.3. Polygons were projected as transparent, so whenever polygons overlapped, the corresponding area on the map would appear darker. The areas selected most frequently on each map would appear the darkest in shade, while the areas that had been less frequently selected by participants would appear lighter in shade. In order to achieve visual comparative analysis each polygon had to be displayed without hardened borders, and also be of the same level of transparency as the other polygons in its variable group. Additionally, polygons of some groups had to be weighted in terms of transparency when being compared to the responses of more populous groups, to account for the best possible visual normalization. Due to the many possible comparative scenarios, various polygons were adjusted in terms of transparency depending on the independent variable group to which the polygons corresponded.

In order to generate a graduated scale collaborative identity map for an independent variable group, I sorted the groups by independent variable category using Microsoft Excel, so as to generate a list of participant numbers that matched the polygons. I then activated the polygons from all of the members in the group in question in the master document to produce an overlay of all the responses from the group in question, as they responded to the particular dependent variable being addressed on the map. Figure 4.3, shows the collaborative response from Muslim participants when asked to indicate the territory they considered to be part of the North Caucasus.

Figure 4.3 – Independent Variable: Islam (N=46), Dependent Variable: North Caucasus, Projected at 99% Transparency

This map is an example of the graduated scale maps that I generated using ArcMap 10.3 to overlay participant data in a GIS mashup.

For each of the four template maps, I categorized sets of independent variable groups, from whose responses graduated scale maps were generated. Some of the groups were derived from biographical data from surveys, such as Armenian (N=31), Dargin (N=8), etc. Other independent variable groups were classified based on their Likert scale responses to the dependent variables from the survey, particularly whether they felt very strongly, or were apathetic to a particular factor of identity. For example, Russians who ranked the importance of their native language as a "5" (N=256) became an independent variable group for this cognitive mapping analysis, as did Russians who ranked their native language as a "1" (N=33).
When interrupting the graduated scale maps, I analyzed several factors. First, I looked at how cohesively or non-cohesively group members represented the dependent variables. Many cohesive responses, representing a greater concentration of like-minded opinions, suggest a stronger group consensus of opinion, and thus a stronger sense of group territorial identity. I also searched for both overall general trends on each map, but also for 'hot-spots,' or specifically popular territory as identified by the participants.

For the second part of the cognitive mapping analysis, I examined whether or not the maps were reflective of expected results, or whether participants tended to follow traditional or discursive definitions regarding their perceived distribution of the dependent variables. The maps showed how strongly participants associated their responses with existing state borders, respective of participants' affinity or association with state territorial delineations and official state discourses on titular status for ethno-national groups in given state territories. Therefore, I was able to assess whether group responses were consistent with various discourses. I first

tabulated the particular territories each participant selected, and then tested for significance using a Chi-squared test, which can be used to determine whether an observed frequency diverges significantly from an expected frequency (Rogerson, 2014).

Map 1: Native Language Salience

Map 1 asked the participants to indicate the territory where their native languages were salient. Independent variable categories for this map were classified according to languages used, first and foremost. I selected the seven largest groups, each representing an individual language, to generate graduated scale maps for analysis. I selected Russians who ranked language as a "5" and Russians who ranked language importance as a "1" to their personal senses of identity, for a Chi-Squared test to show whether or not a strong sense of importance for Russian language meant that participants were likely to select different territories than those who felt language was not important. In total, nine independent variable groups were analyzed for Map 1 (see Table 4.6). These intendent variable groups were selected for analysis specifically to address Research Questions 2a, 2b, and 3a.

Table 4.6 – Variable Groups for Map 1

Independent Variable Groups	Dependent Variable
Armenian (N=21)	Language
Dargin (N=8)	
Ingush (N=6)	
Karachay (N=8)	
Lezgin (N=4)	
Nogay (N=6)	
Russian Overall (N=399)*	
Russian - Language High Importance (N=256)*	
Russian - Language Low Importance (N=33)	

*N=100 Randomized

Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region

Map 2 asked participants to indicate the boundaries of what they considered to be the North Caucasus Region. I identified 10 independent variable groups whose responses and comparative maps and selections would be useful for examining Research Questions 1a and 4a (Table 4.7). For comparative purposes, I performed a Chi-Squared test on the responses from Russian versus Non-Russian, Christian versus Islam, participants who held the Russian Federation in high importance versus low importance, those who held the North Caucasus in high importance versus low importance, and those who identified with the Federal District in terms of high importance versus low importance.

Table 4.7 – Variable Groups for Map 2

Independent Variable Groups	Dependent Variable
Russian (N=399)*	North Caucasus
Non-Russian (N=89)	
Christian (N=399)*	
Islam (N=46)	
Russian Federation - High Importance (N=202)*	
Russian Federation - Low Importance (N=26)	
North Caucasus - High Importance (N=225)	
North Caucasus - Low Importance (N=46)	
Federal District - High Importance (N=203)	
Federal District - Low Importance (N=38)	

*N=100 Randomized

Map 3: Salience of Religion

Map 3 asked the participants to indicate the territory where their religions were salient. I classified 11 independent variables to analyze, based on the particular religions with which participants had self-affiliated in the survey, and on whether they self-identified as practicing their religions, or not (Table 4.8). I also conducted two Chi-Squared tests based on these map data from Christians who said their religion was important versus those who said it was not, and from practicing Muslims versus non-practicing Muslims. These groups and analyses were performed with the goal of examining Research Question 3a.

Table 4.8 – Variable Groups for Map 3

Independent Variable Groups	Dependent Variable
Christian (N=399)*	Religion
Christian – Religion Important (N=151)	
Christian – Religion Not Important (N=59)	
Islam (N=46)	
Islam - Practicing (N=19)	
Islam - Not Practicing (N=27)	

*N=100 Randomized

Map 4: Perceived Practice of National Traditions

Map 4 asked the participants to indicate the territory where their national traditions were practiced. Independent variable categories for this map were classified according to ethno-national group, similar to how the independent variable groups were selected for Map 1. I again selected the seven ethno-national groups that had provided the most responses. In total, seven independent variable groups were analyzed for Map 4 (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 – Variable Groups for Map 4

Independent Variable Groups	**Dependent Variable**
Armenian (N=31)	Practice of National Traditions
Dargin (N=8)	
Ingush (N=6)	
Karachay (N=8)	
Lezgin (N=4)	
Nogay (N=6)	
Russian Overall (N=399)*	

*N=100 Randomized

Interview Data

Participants who agreed to conduct oral interviews after completing the survey and mapping exercise were given the opportunity to explain the information they had provided. I utilized their comments and explanations for the purposes of qualitative clarification. In addition to explaining why they had answered the survey questions as they had, and why they indicated the particular territories they had chosen for the cognitive maps, participants were also asked to answer a list of seven questions geared toward exploring the study's four research questions. Through these interviews, I was able to gather first-hand qualitative data regarding participants' reactions to the representation of their region in practical and popular geopolitical discourse (Ó Tuathail, 2006), their takes on Russia's geopolitical goals for the North Caucasus, and their assessments of North Caucasus territorial integrity, economic strategies, and security issues. The questions read as follows:

In your opinion, does ethno-national identity constitute a major societal factor in the Russian Federation?

Does you nationality in any way have an impact on your social status, or social life?

Do you think that separating ethno-national groups into specific territories provides any kind of advantage to the Russian Federation, or not?

Do you think that the North Caucasus is a unique region?

Does it differ from other regions of the Russian Federation, and if so, how?

How accurately, in your opinion, are political and economic matters in the North Caucasus covered by mass media outlets?

Do you consider the North Caucasus and its various territories as playing a role in Russia's geopolitical strategy?

Is Stavropol *Kray* different from the other Regions in the North Caucasus Federal District?

Interview Questions 1 and 2 were included to address Research Question 3a, on civic and ethno-national views of culture in the North Caucasus. Interview Question 3 was included to better explore Research Question 2b, dealing with the concept of ethno-federalism. Interview Questions 4 and 7 were included to examine research question 3b, addressing the perceived civic-Russianness of the North Caucasus. Interview Question 7 was also included to provide insight into research question 4b, on the status of Stavropol within the North Caucasus. Interview Questions 5 and 6 helped to address Research Questions 3c and 4a, about Russians as a "state-bearing nation" (Brubaker, 1995) and about Russia's ethno-federal and regional polices of constructive regionalization. Responses to Interview Question 3 were also useful for Research Question 4a.

Analysis of Interview Data

Since participant interviews covered content that was potential relevant for each of my research questions, their opinions and anecdotes provided qualitative explanation for many of the quantities trends identified in this study. I selected anecdotes from interviews and included in the discussion chapter of this project when applicable, suggested evidence either for or against the qualitative results of this study.

In addition to working as qualitative supporting material for the project's survey and map data, I also relied on the interviews to examine participants' perceptions of identity in the North Caucasus though a technique called "Human Preset Coding for Response-Based Messages." This technique had been cited as an effective way for measuring multiple content dimensions that can be both theoretical and data-based content dimensions (Abdelal, 2009) and (Johnston et al., 2009). I developed and utilized the a coding scheme to manage the interview data (see Table 4.10), which allowed me to sort participants' responses according to their various independent variable categories, identity trends, as well as their willingness to discuss various aspects of regional identity and regional policy in the study area.

Table 4.10 – Coding Scheme for Interviews

I. General Information
1.) Interview #: Record of interview #, date, and location as stated in the beginning of the recording, which refers to interview participant as follows
2.) ID #: Record of the participant ID # found at the top of every survey
3.) Number of sentences: count and record the number of sentences in the interview, according to standard punctuation, and denote sentence fragments
II. Macro Identity Constructs
Regarding variables 4-6, count and record the number of sentences containing reference to the following (sentences may be counted in more than one category if applicable):
4.) Self-identification: information pertaining specifically to the participant, noted in the first person ("I am not a nationalist," I think that there are problems in the North Caucasus," "I am optimistic about the future of our region").

5.) Role-identification: information pertaining to social roles as perceived by or performed by the participant ("The North Caucasus is the heart of Russia" "The North Caucasus is important for tourism development and the national economy" "Family structures are very important to us").
6.) Collective identification: descriptive information regarding the participant's belonging to or exclusion from a social group, in-group versus out-group references ("We Russians are the cultural backbone of the region," "Islamic traditions are dangerous for Russian society," "I am typical of most Russians in that…").
III. Constructs based on Theory (Tuan, 1974) (Sack, 1983) (Häkli, 2001) (Paasi, 2009) (Felgenhauer, 2010) (Vainikka, 2012)
For variables 7-12, record the number of sentences containing the references to the following criteria and note whether the participant negated reference to said criteria "-" (I do not agree with federal district reform")
7.) Territoriality and problem solving: reference to objectives, action, or reaction to particular policy, and reference to positive outcomes versus negative outcomes regarding actions taken to said topics
8.) Structure of social expectations: references to social obligations responsibilities, rules, codes of behavior, institutions, or social norms, duty to others or some type of collective entity
9.) Affect and feelings: reference to emotional expressions to places (sorrow, happiness, pride, hate, etc.)
10.) Civic identity (*Rossijski*): reference to participation, belonging, or attachment to the Russian state via economic social and political identification
11.) Ethno-national identity (*nationalnost*): reference to language, ancestry, religion and peoplehood
12.)Region as brand: references to characteristics viewed as ascribed to the study area or parts of the study area in regional context
IV. Constructs from Survey Data on Media and Regional Relations
For variables 13-15, use the same procedure
13.) Perceived Media Coverage: perceptions of media coverage and themes featuring the study area/its population
14.) Inter-Regional viewpoint: reference to or comparisons with other regions of the Russian Federation, relations among regions, or relations between regions and Moscow
15.) Stavropol's Place in the North Caucasus: Characteristics of Stavropol *Kray* which make the territory unique or congruent with other territories in the North Caucasus Federal District

Organizing the data according to the coding scheme's constructs allowed me to quantify how many participants had voiced an option regarding each element of identity relevant to the study, and to examine whether participants contextualized their personal conceptions of identity according to place-based factors during their interviews. The coding scheme also allowed me to tell how likely they were to hold certain opinions, whether positive, negative, or indifferent on issues concerning regionalization, identity and territoriality in the North Caucasus. Finally, coding the interview transcripts provided me with a base of comparison to further explore trends

among the various identity groups in this study, and apply them to the various theoretical concepts upon which the scheme was based.

Positionality, Personal Bias, and Limitations

I believe that as a researcher, it is critical to inform the audience of this research of my own personal background, interests, and potential biases that may have influenced my approach to this project, or effected the treatment of the human subjects on which this study founded. I base this belief on scholarly work, such as Bennett (2002), Cloke et al. (2004), and Phillips and Johns (2012), which suggests that a researcher's ethnic background, age, class and gender may affect his or her attitudes and viewpoints in relation to certain issues or groups of people.

I acknowledge that I am an American citizen. I am a male of predominantly Germanic heritage. In the context of the Russian Federation, I am a foreigner. My personal identity is also partly based on being (American) middle class, straight and white. Although I am not Russian, nor do I have any ancestry related to the various ethnic groups in the study area, I am married to a woman who was born and raised in Russia, and who is not ethnically Russian, as the majority of her lineage is Armenian. I have made no secret of these factors to any of the research participants who enquired about them during the course of this project. I am aware of the fact that this knowledge may have had an impact on how participants conducted themselves with me in interviews and in their survey responses. Because people in Russia generally tend to treat foreigners with suspicion, I sometimes needed to convince them that my project is being conducted purely for academic purposes, and that any personal data they provided would not be shared with anyone, or used for reason other than this project and/or subsequent academic research.

I should comment briefly on my personal experiences in the study area and within its community. I have formally studied the Russian language and earned a Bachelor's degree in Russian from Michigan State University. I also spent approximately two years living in Stavropol and working both in the city and the surrounding area, both conducting academic research and as employee of a private firm called *Agenstvo* AKT, which provides English-language services related to education, marketing, and business consulting. I acknowledge the fact that I have relatives in the community, through my wife, and I consider myself part of the greater Stavropol community, through these connections and the friendships that I continue to support there. Although I have made every attempt to remain objective and unbiased while designing and conducting this research project, I admit that my own personal sympathies and interests may have played a subconscious role in my work, as I believe is the case with any social science research.

Chapter V: Results and Analysis from Survey Data

In total, 488 participants chose to provide survey data for this project, whereby they were asked to consider ten potential markers of identity (dependent variables), and rank their associations with these variables in terms of each variables importance to the participants' personal understandings of self-identification. The scale by which the participants rated the dependent variables was a five-point Likert style model, where a ranking of "5" meant "very important," a ranking of "4" meant "important," "3" meant "somewhat important," "2 meant "not important," and "1" meant "absolutely not important." I designed the dependent variables to fall into two basic categories, place-based and non-place-based, as I am interested in determining whether there are differences in how the residents of the North Caucasus understand and appreciate several social and territorial factors, in terms of these factors' importance to participants' personal and collective conceptions of identity. Therefore, four of the dependent variables are social in nature, while others are based on participants' preferences regarding six territories/regions, to which they could personally ascribe a sense of belonging. My reasons for comparing participants' overall mean scores are to determine which dependent variables were most important to the population as a whole, to see whether or not particular variables were favored over others and to what degree, and to see whether or not participants identified with formalized regional territories to the same degree as vernacular regional constructs. Figure, 5.1 shows an overall summary of how the participants ranked each dependent variable.

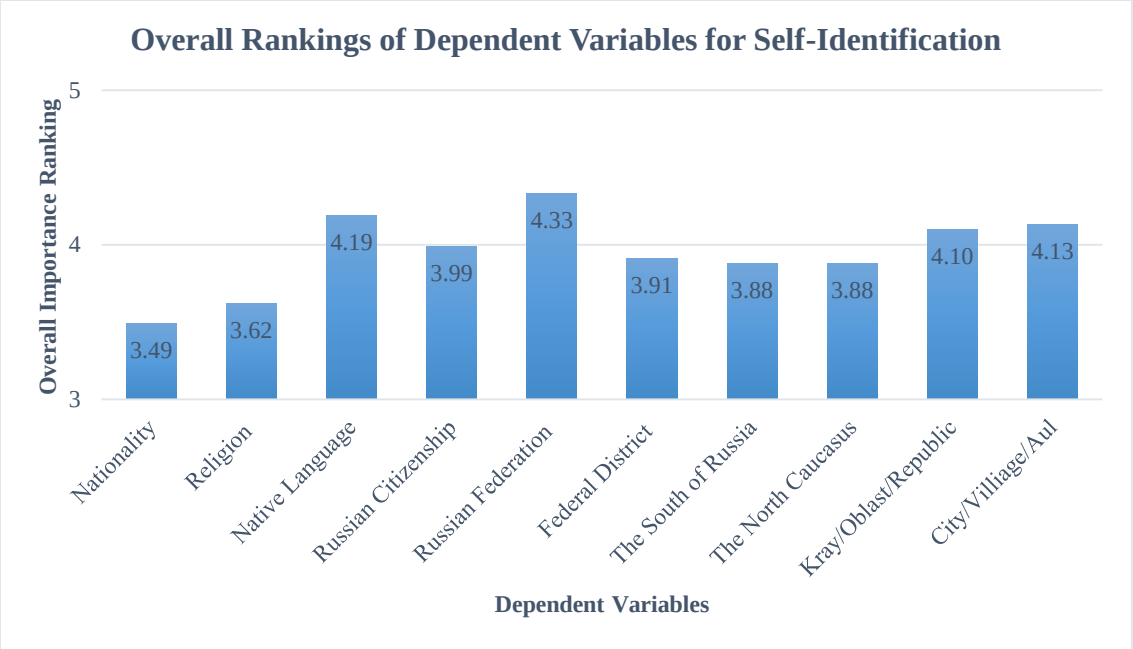

Figure 5.1 – Overall Ranking of Dependent Variables for Participants' Self-Identification

The dependent variables "Nationality (*Natsionalnost*)," "Religion," "Native Language," and "Russian Citizenship" were not territorially-specific but based on social and group associations. Because all of the participants in the study could relate to these four variables, I expected them to score above "3" (somewhat important) in terms of overall importance for the entire survey, which turned out to be the case. My expectation in terms of these dependent variables' order of importance was as follows: "Native Language," "Nationality," "Russian Citizenship," and "Religion." I expected Native Language to be the most important due to the fact that everyone is forced to interact with language on a daily basis. Additionally, work on issues of language and identity by scholars such as Benedict Anderson (2006), highlight the importance of language above other potential factors. Anderson (2006) argues that since the use of vernacular languages in print media became widespread, native language has replaced religion identity as the simplest way for people to associate with members of their own ethnic groups and distinguish members of other groups. Therefore, I had expected "Native Language" to be the

overall most important of all the dependent variables in the study. I expected "Nationality" and "Russian Citizenship" to follow in importance. Both of these concepts were applicable to each participant, and since all of them had "Russian Citizenship," I predicted that "Nationality" would be more important, as it highlighted a more unique level of identity. I had expected religion to be the least important social dependent variable, based on the fact that both Orthodox Christianity and Sunni Islam, the two major religions practiced in the study area, were not universally affecting all of the participants at a personal level. As the work of scholars such as Karpov (2010), Knox (2004), and Marat and Richardson (1998) suggests, while practice and appreciation for Orthodoxy and Islam are on the rise in Russia, especially among younger people, there still tends to be serious resistance to these ideas held by members of previous generations, who spent their formative years living in an officially anti-religious society, the USSR.

For the other six variables, which examined participants' preferences of association with place-based constructs, I expected the participants to follow the trends I found when addressing similar questions in a previous research project (Thelen, 2010), whereby participants from Stavropol *Kray* and Karachay-Cherkessia preferred to associate with the North Caucasus in a vernacular sense rather than formalized territories such as the Southern Federal District. Also, while results from my previous study suggested that participants in the North Caucasus preferred this regional construct, and sub-regional territories (*kray*s and republics) to the federal scale idea of the "Russian Federation," the "Russian Federation," was more important than a formalized regional construct the "Southern Federal District," of which Stavropol *Kray* and Karachay-Cherkessia were part at the time. Since this study also asked participants to consider their cities/villages/*auls* in terms of their personal conceptions of identity, I expected this more

localized scale to be popular, due to familiarity and lived experience, but due to its lower priority in scalar size and importance within the Russian Federal System, I thought that this dependent variable was likely to be ranked the lowest. Therefore, I expected the overall rankings of the various place-based dependent variables in the following orders: "North Caucasus," as the most popular, followed by "The South of Russia," "*Kray*-Republic," "Russian Federation," "Federal District," and finally "City/Village/*Aul*."

Out of the four social variables, "Native Language" registered the highest score, with an overall mean of 4.19. The next most popular was "Russian Citizenship" (mean = 3.99), followed by "Religion" (mean = 3.62), and then "Nationality" (mean = 3.49). While I had expected "Native Language" to be the most popular, I expected "Nationality" to be the next most popular. However, participants on the whole chose to identity more strongly with "Russian Citizenship" and "Religion," suggesting an overall higher degree of emphasis on civic/political and religious/spiritual identities than with an exclusive sense of ethno-national identity. A lower emphasis on nationality than on the other dependent variables was also demonstrated by many of the participants whom I interviewed, in addition to quantitative survey data. A typical response on the topic of "Nationality" as an identity factor can be seen in the response of participant V003, a 24--year old Russian woman from Nevinnomyssk, Stavropol *Kray*:

> Nationality as an important factor in contemporary Russian society … but I would say that it is not fully important. Although, young people might say it does matter because there are a lot of points of contention among the young people here. Nationality remains somewhat important because the government pays attention to it. Some people also let nationality affect where they buy real estate. Maybe someone would not buy an apartment in a certain part of town because he did not want to live next to national groups with bad reputations, for example where they are selling vegetables in markets. But, nationality does not have any bearing on my personal life or social status. I have lived here all my life, among the same people … Russians.

These comments from participant V003 clearly show a sense of engagement with "Nationality" as well as a consciousness of social difference based on "Nationality." However, her hesitancy not to claim the importance of "Nationality" was a very common trend in the interviews, especially among ethnic Russian participants. This trend draws upon Brubaker's (1995) notions of how members of a state-bearing nation are likely to behaving in the context of their own nationalizing states, whereby ideas of civic identity and national identity overlap. Because ethnic Russian culture serves in many ways as the basis for norms and civic behavior in Russian society, and constitutes the dominant culture throughout the state, an ethnic Russian person may choose not to separate notions of identity into state/civic versus national, what Murphy (2008) describes as a non-nationalist identity. On the other hand, non-Russians, who cannot associate their ethno-national identity with the entire state in a salient sense, would likely have to draw on these two markers of identity separately. Due to this necessary separation of national and state/civic markers by non-Russians, ethnic Russians may see having a strong sense of national identity therefore as a specifically non-Russian trait. Holding such a view point could explain why ethnic Russians tended to shy away from strong associations specifically with their own ethno-national group, leading them to value a sense of non-nationalist identity.

Perhaps the biggest surprise to me, out of all the data in the survey, was the fact that "Russian Federation" registered not just the highest overall mean score of the territorial identity markers, but the highest overall mean score of any of the survey's dependent variables with 4.33. Association with Russia at the federal scale even scored more highly than with "Russian Citizenship" (mean = 3.99), suggesting that participants favored a territorial conception of Russia versus a more civic marker. This result suggests that an understanding of Russia and the

hierarchy of place-based identity markers with in as a meta-geography, such as suggested by Lewis and Wigen (1997), Paasi (2002), and Murphy (2008), is an appropriate way to conceptualize how people understand the various scalar identity markers in the Russian Federation. The individual territorial constructions, "Russian Federation," "North Caucasus Federal District," "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," and so on, therefore constitute as spatial framework of knowledge (Lewis and Wigen, 1997) from which to draw associations. One way that associations can be made with territories as identity markers within a meta-geography is via key institutions (Paasi, 2002). Because the Russian Federation exhibits a centralized power structure, described by Agnew (2005) in terms of a "classic sovereignty regime," characterized by a high and effective degree of centralized political authority, one would expect its key institutions to distribute from the federal level across more localized scales of meaning.

I had expected the overall mean scores to reflect a higher appreciation for "Russian Federation" than some of the other territorial identity markers. However, the scalar preferences of the participants did not follow my expectation, as the most localized identity marker, "City/Village/*Aul*," was the second-most popular of the place-based dependent variables with an overall mean score of 4.13. This trend in the data to prioritize the federal and local scales in importance for one's identity can be understood with the comments of Participant V021, a 26-year old ethnic Russian man from Stavropol, who said:

> The two most important scales for understanding where someone is from is a small homeland and a large homeland, in the middle meaning gets lost. We live in a local context, and we see the overall context of Russia through media and institutions.

It seems that the data trends from this study point to a similar overall opinion as the one held by Participant V021, because the four regional scale place-based dependent variables scored lower overall than dependent variables at the federal and local scales. This notion of preference for

federal or local scales speaks to Knight's (1982) work on scalar identity, where meso-level scales of meaning, in this case constructs such as federal districts, are potentially confusing as they join different kinds of territories, *kray*s, *oblast*s, and republics, together under a unified form of inclusive governance. Institutions that disseminate more powerful meanings therefore are seen to originate from with the federal and localized scales.

The overall most popular place-based identity variable was "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," which had a mean score of 4.10. "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic" was followed by "Federal District," which registered an overall mean score of 3.91. For regional identity, it is important to note that these two dependent variables are both formal regions, as are "Russian Federation" and "City/Village/*Aul*." Therefore, the two vernacular regional dependent variables, "The South of Russia" (mean = 3.88) and "The North Caucasus" (mean = 3.88), ranked as the lowest of the place-based markers in the study. However, it is important to note that participants did rank all of the place-based dependent variables more highly than both "Religion," and "Nationality." This result was surprising because, as the interview data in this study suggest, elements relating to religion and nationality are very present in the landscape of the North Caucasus, and are considered to be important in terms of social practices and expectations throughout the study area.

The overall mean scores provide a general sense of how participants felt about the study's dependent variables, and constitute a baseline by which to compare more specific identity trends present among various groups of participants. After establishing these basic survey data trends, my next step in the survey data analysis was to identify any significant differences among several identity groups (independent variables), in order to gain a more complex understanding of potential differences in opinion among the participants.

Significant Differences in Identity Preferences between Independent Variable Categories

In order to determine whether or not the distributions of rankings for the study's dependent variables differed significantly between the binary categories of the study's 10 independent variables, I conducted a Kruskal-Wallis test. The Kruskal-Wallis test is a non-parametric test used to determine whether or not differences in distributions between two populations are statically significant, as opposed to having occurred randomly. Each of 10 independent variable groups in the study has two binary categories (Figure 5.6). The output the Kruskal-Wallis test, in the case of each independent variable, showed whether or not the distributions of responses from the two binary categories were significant in regard to each dependent variable. Because each independent variable category represents a unique identity group, for example "Muslims," or "ethnic Russians," understood in comparison to another group, "Christians," or "non-Russians," determining whether or not these groups opinions differed significantly across the categories was important for exploring differences in understandings, accounting for social dependent variables, as well as placed-based dependent variables. In total, the Kruskal-Wallis tests that I conducted indicated 26 instances where the differences in the answer distributions were significant between independent variable group categories. In the following sections I will present these significant instances, and provide anecdotal evidence from interview data that supports these findings.

Significant Differences in Identity Preferences between Ethnic Russians and Non-Russian Participants

The two independent variable categories for "Nationality" being compared in the Kruskal-Wallis test were Russian (indicating that participants had self-identified as ethnic Russians) and Non-Russian (indicating that participations had self-identified as non-Ethnic

Russians). When comparing the Kruskal-Wallis output for "Nationality," I found significance values (p-values) lower than the significance level (0.01) in regard to three of the dependent variables, thus indicating that the differences in their distributions were significant. The results showed that in terms of the importance of religion for self-identification, Non-Russians (mean = 4.18) considered their religion to be significantly more important than Russians (mean = 3.52). Non-Russians (mean = 4.32) also ranked their perceived importance of the North Caucasus Region to be significantly higher than Russians (mean = 3.79), and Non-Russians' (mean = 4.42) perceived importance of their *Krays*, *Oblasts*, or Republics was also significantly higher than Russians' (mean = 4.04) perceived importance of the same variable.

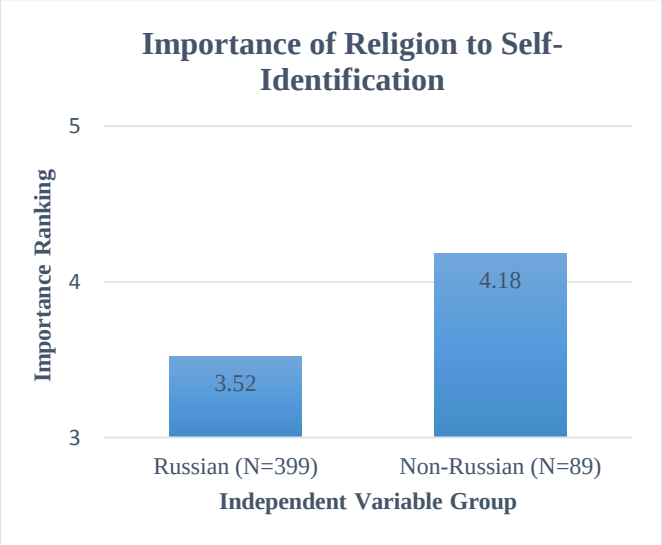

Figure 5.2 – Importance of Religion to Self-Identification between Russians and Non-Russians

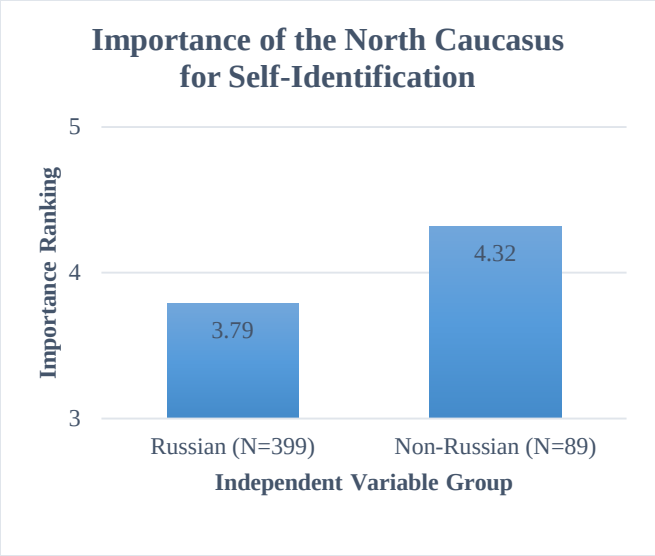

Figure 5.3 – Importance of the North Caucasus for Self-Identification between Russians and Non-Russians

The fact that non-Russian groups native to the North Caucasus region are often referenced collectively as "North Caucasus Nationalities" (*Severnye Kavkazkie Natsionalnasti*) creates a regional sense of cultural separation, which works to unite a large number of otherwise unique socio-cultural groups under a common banner. Because Russians are generally not recognized as being native to the North Caucasus region, perhaps with the exception of the Cossacks (Boeck, 1998), a sense of ethnic Russian identity can be understood as outside, or in addition to the North Caucasus nationalities. Additionally, if non-Russian North Caucasus nationalities are seen as established and legitimate cultures in the region, then Russians could be seen as outsiders, or native to places elsewhere. Such a blatant association with the North Caucasus region itself, in addition to the greater Russian/non-Russian binary subtext, would likely work to explain why non-Russians would value an overarching territorial association with the North Caucasus region at a significantly higher level than ethnic Russians.

Even Armenians, a widely accepted South Caucasus nationality, are often associated with non-Russians, and therefore with the North Caucasus region as well. That fact that significant

differences in the Kruskal-Wallis output existed between non-Russians and Russians, and not between Christians and Muslims, points to the notion that Armenians, who overwhelmingly identified themselves as Christians in the survey, responded more in line with the other non-Russian nationalities, who mostly identified as Muslims. This result therefore suggests that there is definitely an attractive sense associated with the North Caucasus that is shared among many non-Russian ethno-national groups regardless of their origin. One thing that the various non-Russian nationalities tend to have in common, in the context of the North Caucasus, is the established communities in the region. According to participant V006, a man of mixed Russian and Armenian descent:

> We will always observe sub-cultures in Russia. Armenians go about their own business, so do Chechens. It does not matter where they are, as long as they can found and maintain communities.

If establishing communities is indeed a major factor in forming place-based identities among members of said community in the context of Russia, then the history of ethnic settlement in the area, combined with contemporary trends in migration and population dynamics, would certainly suggest that most, if not all of the non-Russian groups in the study area could justifiably associated with the North Caucasus in a vernacular sense. Since ethnic Russian communities exist throughout the Russian Federation, a focused association with the North Caucasus as a specific context for community for ethnic Russians would be just one of many regional associations that ethnic Russian participants could consider.

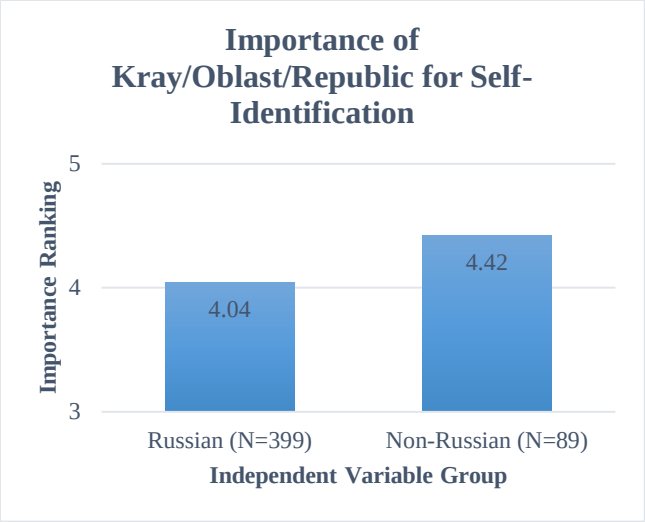

Figure 5.4 – Importance of *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic for Self-Identification between Russian and Non-Russians

Non-Russians' significant preference for *Kray*s/*Oblast*s/Republics is perhaps logical, due to the nature of ethno-federalism in contemporary Russia. Non-Russian groups, especially those with titular status, can establish formalized social norms through the use of non-Russian official language and separate republic constitutions and legal structures that are tailored to the various non-Russian ethno-national groups' ways of life and social preferences. In such a system, *Kray*s and *Oblast*s, which constitute the majority of ethnic Russian territories, are governed directly according to the constitution of the Russian Federation and, in a legal sense, are not substantively different. However, laws, customs, and social expectations can be more unique in republics, and can differ vastly from republic to republic. It is also important to note that most of the non-Russian participants in the study, having completed the surveys in Stavropol, have obviously experienced life to some degree in a *kray* and a republic, whereas Russian participants may not have lived in or even spent significant time in republics. This preference of association with a more sub-federal scale territorial identity marker aligns with Sack's (1983) notions of degrees of territorialization, where *kray*s, *oblast*s, and republics reflect different degrees of autonomous

power, in relation to the federal center. Karachay-Cherkessia, and other republics, can be considered less territorialized than Stavropol *Kray*, because of their unique sets of autonomous rights and laws, which are not applicable in majority ethnic Russian *kray*s and *oblast*s. In Russia's ethno-federal system, the autonomous features of the republics are specifically translated in ethno-national terms, as certain sets of defined rights for specific groups of people, in specific territories.

Significant Differences in Identity Preferences between Native Russian Speakers and Native Speakers of Other Languages

When analyzing response data in terms of participants' native languages, the independent variable "Language," I expected the results to trend the same as they had in regard to the independent variable "Nationality," as the participants tended to fall into the same categories, with Russian speakers' responses in line with ethnic Russians, and the responses of speakers of non-Russian languages tending to follow the same trend as the responses submitted by non-Russians. Therefore, I expected to see significant differences for the categories Religion, North Caucasus, and *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic, and these trends were indeed present in the data output, with Native speakers of non-Russian languages (mean = 4.26) showing a significantly higher preference for religion than Native Russian speakers (mean = 3.51), Native speakers of non-Russian languages (mean = 4.40) showing a significantly higher preference for their *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic than did native Russian speakers (mean = 4.05), and Non-Russian native speakers (mean = 4.50) also indicating a higher preference for the North Caucasus than native Russian speakers (mean = 3.77).

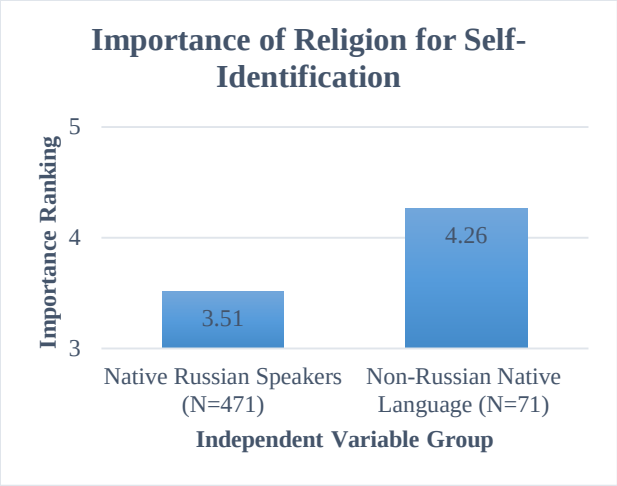

Figure 5.5 – Importance of Religion for Self-Identification between Russian Speakers and Speakers of Other Languages

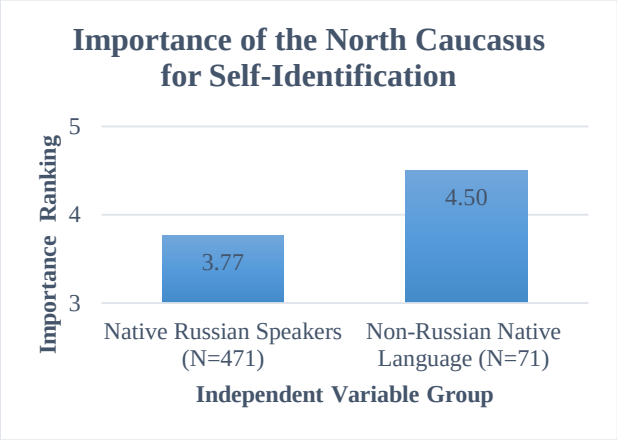

Figure 5.6 – Importance of North Caucasus for Self-Identification between Russian Speakers and Speakers of Other Languages

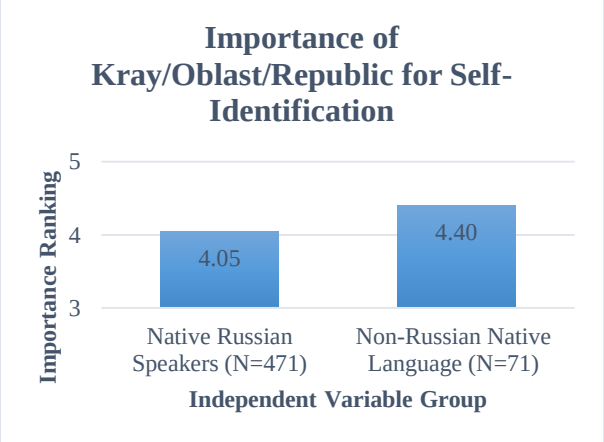

Figure 5.7 – Importance of *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic for Self-Identification between Russian Speakers and Speakers of Other Languages

Interestingly though, another dependent variable, Nationality, showed a significantly higher preference by native speakers of non-Russian languages (mean = 3.94) than by native Russian speakers (mean = 3.41), as 18 participants who had self-identified with a national identity other than Russian, also identified Russian as their native language. The addition of "Nationality" to the list of significantly different preferences for language identification, and not for ethno-national identification, is potentially interesting because this trend suggests that speaking one's native language leads to a more significant appreciation for his or her nationality, at least in the context of the study area, than one's social and cultural connections to his or her ethno-national group.

Anecdotal evidence from the interview data also tended to suggest that speakers of non-Russian languages were generally concerned about the future of their native languages, in terms of their use and preservation. According to participant V028, a 34-year old Nogay woman from Karachevsk, Karachay-Cherkessia,

> Nationality is a really important factor for me. I have two young sons and I will insist that they marry Nogay women. It is important for me that their wives will be Nogay so that they have the chance to be raised with our traditions. If they do not marry Nogay women, then their children will not learn our language and that is that… my decedents will not be Nogays! Language is the most important factor. The Nogay language holds our nation together.

In the comments of participant V028, she highlights the idea that language itself is critical for the other elements of nationhood to be practiced, and that those who do not speak Nogay, are in fact culturally inauthentic, and not true members of the Nogay nation.

The importance of language authenticity was also present among the interviews, in which several participants questioned whether or not various versions or dialects of their native

language should be considered socially or culturally equivalent to the standards versions. According to participant V031, an Armenian woman living in Stavropol:

> I would consider Stavropol, Krasnodar, and Rostov to have clean Armenian (*chistiy Armyanski*) for now, but I can tell you that the language is already changing there as well. I have noticed that third-generation and some second-generation Armenians in Russia understand Armenian, but they do not speak it very well … for example, even a place like Baku, from what I know, has a language is more like Karabakh-Armenian, which I do not consider to be clean Armenian.

The notion that the use of Russian language by non-Russians can replace non-Russian languages within greater ethno-national non-Russian communities in the North Caucasus was also present in the interviews of several Armenian participants. This group included participant V030, a 25-year old Armenian woman who was born in Yerevan, Armenia, but immigrated to Stavropol at the age of 5, and Participant V031, quoted above, a 23--year old Armenian women, also from Yerevan who immigrated to Stavropol at age 3. According to participant V030:

> It seems to me though that Armenian language is really only present where Armenians live together and form a community. Otherwise Armenians here in Russia all know Russian, and will freely speak Russian with anyone. However, I have met a lot of Armenians my age from other cities, outside of Stavropol, who have preferred to speak Russian with me, rather than Armenian.

These comments by Participant V030 speak to the fact that Russian, as the *lingua franca* of the North Caucasus, is necessarily spoken by members of the Armenian community. In addition to being taught in schools and used throughout Russia as the language for state functions and intuitions, Russian language in the North Caucasus is also critical for intercommunication among the various ethno-national communities in the region. Therefore, the opportunity to speak Russian, in addition to the sociocultural and economic expectations and advantages associated with Russian language, make knowing and communicating in Russian a necessity. Other

languages, although possibly prevalent within various non-Russian communities, are accessible only in situations of mono-ethnic communication.

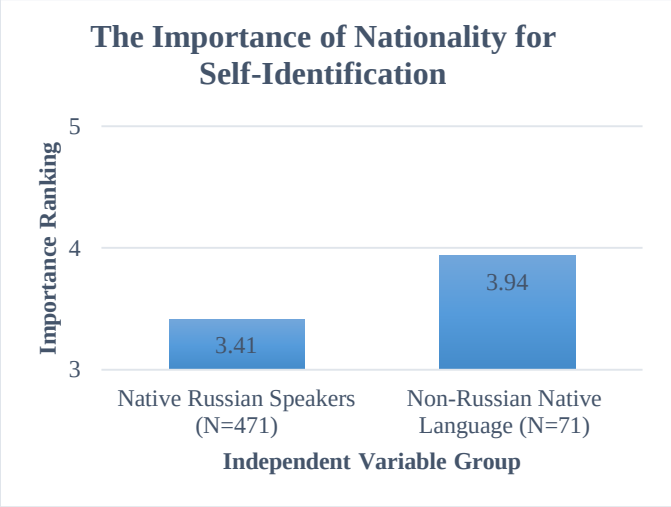

Figure 5.8 – Importance of Nationality for Self-Identification between Russian Speakers and Speakers of Other Languages

Significant Differences in Identity Preferences between Participants Claiming to Practice National Traditions versus Those Claiming not to Practice National Traditions.

Of all of the independent variable group categories in this project, none showed more significant differences across the dependent variables as "Practice of National Traditions." The results show that participants who claimed to actively practice what they considered to be the traditions of their ethno-national group also said that many elements of identity were significantly more important to/for their personal understanding of identity than did participants who claimed not to actively practice national traditions. These differences occurred across both territorial and social variables, with the exception of the dependent variable "Citizenship," which refers to the importance of citizenship in the Russian Federation. Citizenship was given a significantly higher preference by participants not actively practicing national traditions (mean = 4.11) to those claiming to practice their national traditions (mean = 3.54).

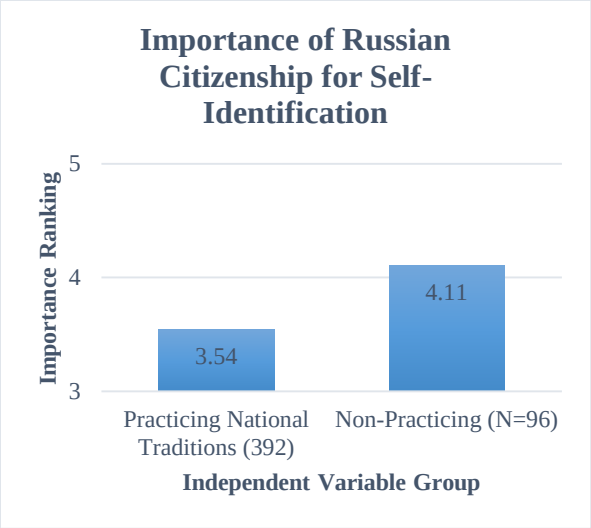

Figure 5.9 – Importance of Russian Citizenship for Self-Identification between Participants Who Practice National Traditions and Those Who Do Not

Relying on a sense of civic inclusion in the overall context of the Russian Federation was significantly favored by those respondents who reportedly did not practice their national traditions. This trend is interesting because it shows a preference for a greater, more inclusive sense of belonging, beyond one's ethno-national community, language group, or religious belief system. It also suggests that a lack of personal connection to nationalistic elements might lead to a greater appreciation for the idea of a *Rossisskie* sense of personal identity, in agreement with the concept of non-nationalist identity (Murphy, 2008). In a multi-ethnic environment, such as the North Caucasus, citizenship in the Russian Federation can be used as a potential identity marker for a person of any nationality. Participant V037, a 30--year old Armenian woman from Stavropol who indicated that she did not practice her national traditions, offered the following comments, illustrating the importance of citizenship in regard to social inclusion with the greater context of the Russian state:

> For me, citizenship in the Russian Federation is most important out of the options listed on the survey. I think I feel this way because I live in the Russian Federation, but I am not ethnically Russian. Citizenship means more to me than nationality because we have a lot of nationalities, but we all have Russian citizenship in common.

For non-Russian participants, such as Participant V037, an inclusive sense of identity found in connection to the Russian Federation seems to be a formative component of her personal sense of identity.

While citizenship was favored by participants not practicing their national traditions, the dependent variables "Nationality," "Religion," and "Native Language," were all ranked significantly higher by participants practicing national traditions. Of three social variables, "Native Language" scored the highest, with practicing participants registering a mean score of 4.33, versus non-practicing participants' mean score of 3.65. This result is logical because speaking a particular language is a social process and a potential identity marker with which every participant in the study was likely to have engaged (perhaps with the potential exception being any non-Russian speaking participants living in isolation from their ethno-national communities).

Language was also the dependent variable mentioned most often by participants in this study's interview data, with many participants commenting specifically on its importance. Participant V039, a 24--year old Russian man from Stavropol, who also indicated that he actively practiced Russian national traditions, offered the following comments on language:

> I consider my native language, Russian, to be the most important factor in my identity. I am proud of my language and I believe that we should respect it and speak it correctly. It makes me sad to see so many people in Russia today either speaking it or writing it with a lot of mistakes. I also believe that language is the most important part of any culture. In Russia today, many younger people my age do not continue any of the traditions of previous generations, and they rarely go to church. So, I think the language is something that everyone has, and it is actually the only element that all ethnic Russian people share.

Responses such as that offered by participant V039 support the idea that language, which can be considered as a national tradition, is a fundamental component in Russian society. Due to the

fact that Russian is the regional *lingua franca*, official language of the Russian Federation, and most commonly spoken native language in the North Caucasus means that engagement with the Russian language is a social and economic necessity. However, his comments also indicate an awareness of change, and lack of attention and effort in supporting classical or educated levels of language usage, pointing to various standards of the language which could potentially be used to discern between Russian simply as a language of communication or as a specific marker of heritage and national identity that is specific to ethnic Russians as a group.

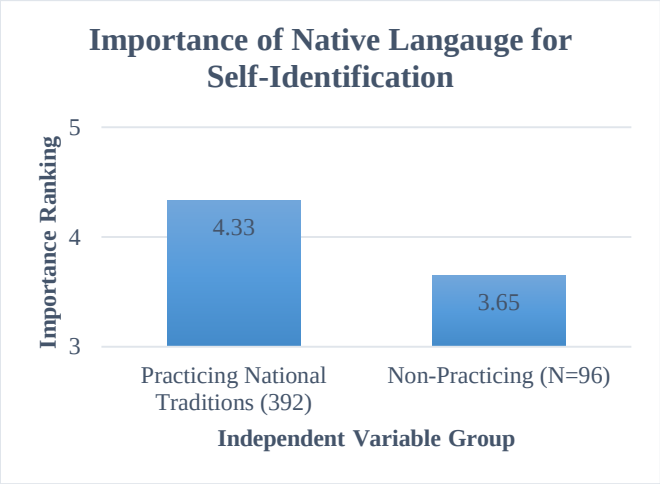

Figure 5.10 – Importance of Native Language for Self-Identification between Participants Who Practice National Traditions and Those Who Do Not

While social engagement and interaction with the Russian language is practically unavoidable in Stavropol, those participants who claimed not to practice national traditions were much more indifferent to the idea of language in their interview comments. Some participants, among those not practicing their national traditions, were even dismissive of the importance of language. However, they still tended to associate language as an important factor in terms of national identity as a concept. Participant V004, a 25-year old Russian man from Stavropol, who indicated that he did not actively practice Russian national traditions, offered the following comments:

> for me associating with an ethnic group and an ethnic language is not unimportant. I feel like I cannot fully take myself out of the Russian ethnic group, but I also cannot say that I try to support or practice our cultural traditions. I could not say I am a model Russian, I suppose.

The comments of Participant V004 clearly show an awareness regarding the link between ethno-national groups and their native languages, and suggest that there are understood standards to which a member of the Russian ethno-national group should adhere in order to be considered a model Russian.

After "Native Language," "Religion" was the next-highest ranking dependent variable with significantly higher preference by participants practicing their national traditions. Those who indicated that they practiced national traditions gave "Religion" an overall mean score of 3.74, while non-practicing participants' mean sore for "Religion" was 3.10.

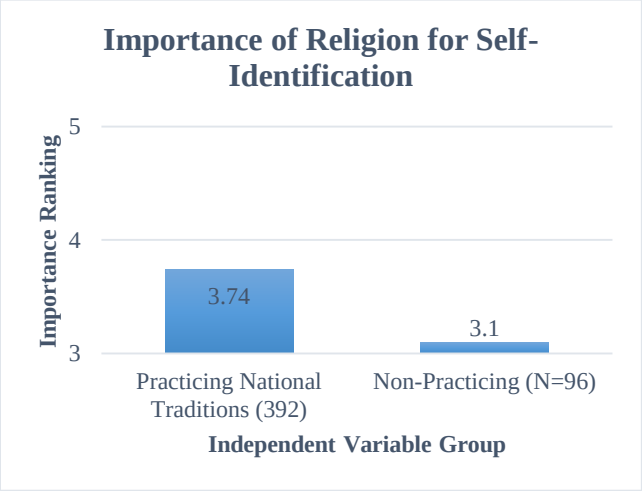

Figure 5.11 – Importance of Religion for Self-Identification between Participants Who Practice National Traditions and Those Who Do Not

Participant interviews tended to focus on religion as a major North Caucasus identity marker, particularly among populations who are seen as taking forms of strict or extreme impetrations of either Islam or Christianity. A theme that was present in several interviews among participants who claimed to practice their national traditions was the idea that religion, and religious identity in the North Caucasus constitutes an identity marker that provides a

broader sense of inclusion than would language or nationality, but a more distinct and exclusive marker than Russian Citizenship. According to Participant V021, a 26--year old Russian man from Stavropol:

> I consider religion to be the most important social factor in the North Caucasus. The effects of religion are the most pronounced of the various social factors on this list. I am not talking about people who have a moderate sense of religion, I am referring to people are radical or fanatical about how they practice. These people are very noticeable in the North Caucasus. Even at a basic level, take someone for example from our Slavic Stavropol *Kray*. It would be easy for that person to establish communication with an Ossetian, or possible an Armenian or Georgian because they share a commonality in terms of Christian understandings. There are seldom problems among national groups of the same religion. Conflict gets played off at having to do with nationality, but we do not really see Christians in conflict with other Christians, or Muslims in conflict with Muslims, at least not in this region. I also believe that in recent times, Muslims identify more strongly with an identity based in Islam, rather than an identity based on their various national groups.

The comments of Participant V021, someone who identified as practicing national traditions, present religion as a broad identity marker. The idea of "Christian understandings" among believers of various churches, a theme present in his comments, places emphasis on the idea that Christianity as an overall identity concept might be considered in a collective sense, rather than in term of exclusive national understandings of the various Christian Churches common in the North Caucasus, such as the Russian Orthodox Church, Armenian Apostolic Church, or Georgian Orthodox Church. Therefore, social differentiation between Christianity and Islam is more important than differentiation between various branches or denominations within the two religions.

Although divisions between Christianity and Islam were shown in the results from this study to be an important identity split in the North Caucasus, whether or not one practiced his or her national traditions served as a basis for significant difference in the importance of religion, according to the Kruskal Wallis test results. Since religion can in itself be considered a national

tradition, it is perhaps logical that those participants who practice national traditions in general would indicate the importance of religion for their personal conceptions of identity, as the data analysis shows. Therefore, comments made by participants who indicated that that they did not practice national traditions should have suggested a lack of importance, or at least indifference to the importance of "Religion" for identity. Such a pattern was indeed evident among the interviews of participants who did not actively practice national traditions, as demonstrated by these comments from Participant V006, an 18--year old Stavropol man of mixed Russian, Armenian and Ukrainian national heritage:

> I would tell you that religion and nationality for me are really not important at all, therefore I ranked them as "1." Someone's nationality does not play a role in how I see him or her as a person. Whether people are good or bad, or whether they are interesting or not really depends on might be affected by the kinds of experiences they have, and some of these experiences could be had, or encountered within the context of national traditions, but I do not think such experiences determine how their character will be overall … Religion is not really important to me personally because I myself and not religious and I do not really associate with any others who are religious.

Participant V006 places emphasis on the social channels that religious participation and association can create for a person in the North Caucasus, but ultimately focuses on one's individual character as the most critical element of his or her identity. However, his comments also suggest the importance of these aforementioned social channels, as well as the broader generalizations that exist in regard to perceived religious identification. The idea that people will be able to draw on understandings concerning their religious persuasions, which was presented by participant V021's comments, is supported by participant V006 in terms of his admitted lack of voluntary association with religious people.

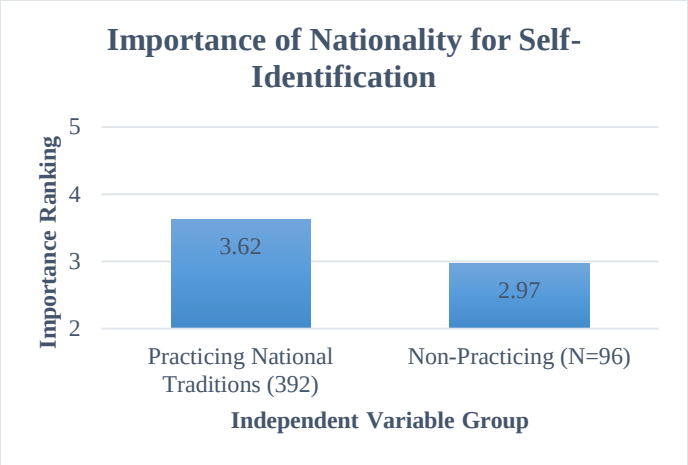

Figure 5.12 – Importance of Nationality for Self-Identification between Participants Who Practice National Traditions and Those Who Do Not

As was expected, "Nationality" as an overall concept was also favored by participants who practiced national traditions, with a mean score of 3.62 versus a mean score of 2.97 from non-practicing participants. "Nationality" was ranked lower than "Native Language" and "Religion," and received the lowest overall mean score of 2.97 by participants not practicing national traditions of any significantly lower mean score in this study, the only mean score of significant differences between independent variables groups to receive and an overall mean score lower than 3.

Although all of the interview participants addressed the concept of "Nationality," it was most often mentioned in connection to the overall cultural diversity of the North Caucasus region. However, participants not practicing their national traditions tended to rely more heavily on language and religion as identity markers, emphasizing the fact that personal choices and preferences guide one's choices of language usage and religious practice, while one's nationality, at least in the North Caucasus, is not considered to be chosen, but rather inherited by birth. Comments from participant V036, a 24--year old Nogay woman from the *aul* Novyi Urengoi,

Karachay-Cherkessia, support the aforementioned lack of preference for "Nationality" among participants who did not practice their national traditions:

> Nationality for me is not really important. Religion is important because I believe it is both more of a point of contention between people, and it is also a choice. People do not really chose their nationalities but they choose which religions to follow.

While nationality was less important than most other identity markers for participants not practicing national traditions on a personal level, many of participants in this independent variable group did comment on the importance of social connections in contemporary Russian society. Those participants practicing national traditions tended also to comment on the idea of connections, and several participants suggested that, since one's nationality can act as a screening factor for career opportunities or social advancement, the idea of nationality was still meaningful for making social assessments with people who were unfamiliar. According to participant V033, a 26--year old Russian Man from Stavropol, that indicated that he practiced Russian national traditions:

> Although I practice some Russian traditions, I do not believe that nationality really has any practical meaning in modern Russian society, other than as a way to establish connections for work, or maybe in the government or the army. The most important factor in Russian society is having connections, specifically with money and more often than not in Moscow. Here we simply exist, as part of the Russian Federation … somewhere in the social structure.

Participant V033 suggests the importance of group connections for personal advancement. Throughout this study, the idea of connections became very prominent among participants' responses. With the example of socio-cultural identity markers like "Native Language," "Religion," and "Nationality," group delineation becomes quite clear. The preferences of participants who practiced national traditions were also significantly higher across four of the placed-based dependent variables in this study, including "Russian Federation," "The South of Russia," "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," and "City/Village/*Aul*." The only placed-based dependent

variables were the "North Caucasus," and the "North Caucasus Federal District," about which the responses from the groups practicing and not practicing their national traditions did not differ significantly. However, the results suggest that practice of national traditions is related to territorial awareness in relation to personal conceptions of identity.

The federal scale identity-marker "Russian Federation," the overall most highly rated dependent variable in the study, was significantly preferred by participants who practiced their national traditions (mean = 4.41), compared to non-practicing participants (mean = 3.97). The dependent variable with the next highest mean scores was "City/Village/*Aul*," the most localized scale, with the mean of practicing participants at 4.23 and the mean score of non-practicing participants at 3.74. This trend shows that participants thought more highly of place-based identity markers at the widest and narrowest ends of the territorial scope of this study, with regional conceptions given less importance overall. The comments of participant V021, a 26-year old Russian man from Stavropol, who claimed to practice Russian national traditions, explain this trend:

> The two most important scales for understanding who someone is, or where someone is from, is a small homeland and a large homeland, in the middle meaning gets lost. We live in a local context, and we see the overall context of Russia through media and institutions.

Preferring the local and federal scales over regional place-based identity markers seemed often to be the case with many participants. As participant V021 suggests, presentation is important for understanding place-based identity markers. Because information tends to be presented at the federal level, contextualized in term of the Russian Federation, the federal scale is easy to identify. It is also the most inclusive place-based dependent variable, and an option with which each participant in the study could identity.

Figure 5.13 – Importance of Russian Federation for Self-Identification between Participants Who Practice National Traditions and Those Who Do Not

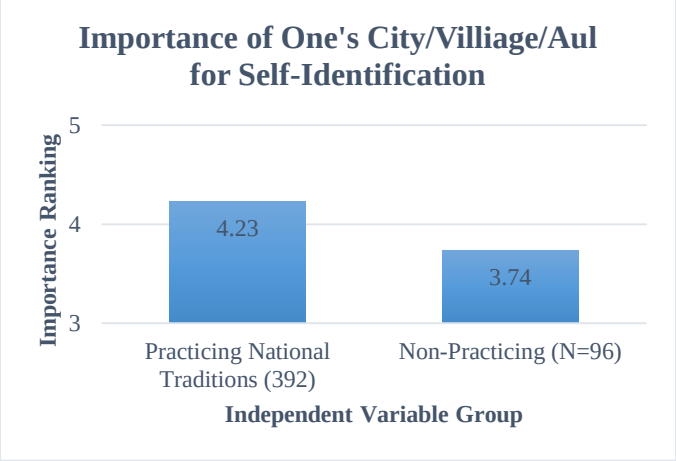

Figure 5.14 – Importance of City/Village/*Aul* for Self-Identification between Participants Who Practice National Traditions and Those Who Do Not

Matching the trend of preference for place-based identity markers by participants who indicated that they practiced their national traditions, the dependent variable "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic" was preferred significantly higher by the practicing participants (mean = 4.19) than by non-practicing participants (mean = 3.71). Several interview participants highlighted the fact that the republics especially were important for preservation of non-Russian national traditions. Participant V005, a 29-year old Dargin man from Stavropol, who indicated that he practiced Dargin national traditions, offered the following comments:

> Dargin national traditions are primarily practiced in Dagestan, where we are socially free to behave according to our traditional ways of life and raise our children accordingly. However, there is a Dargin presence now in Stavropol *Kray*, and I would argue that it growing. We (Dargins) are more or less in every republic though. I would say that there is probably a small Dargin diaspora community somewhere in each of the North Caucasus Republics, and also in most of the Russian territories… at least in Southern Russia. However, a lot depends on the living standards anywhere you look at Dagastani populations, and how they relate back to the Republic of Dagestan … I can say for sure that there are many Dargins who really do care about their nationality, and who live according to our traditions. One example would be respect for elders. Very traditional styles of upbringing really emphasize this factor. However these factors tend to be emphasized among those who have connections back to Dagestan.

Participant V005's references to Dagestan as an important place for Dargin cultural traditions shows why, in the context of the North Caucasus, and within an ethno-federal structure in general, having a defined sense of national territory and homeland gives one a reference point to place his or her traditions as accepted social norms, or as sets of practices that are outside of accepted social norms in a particular territory. The ideas that Dargin Diaspora communities are practicing Dargin traditions more authentically if they maintain connections back to Dagestan, helps explain why those participants who are in tune with these traditions in their everyday lives would also be aware of the differences among cultures, and therefore have an appreciation for specific territories where their ethno-national social norms are considered to be "in place" (Staeheli, 2003).

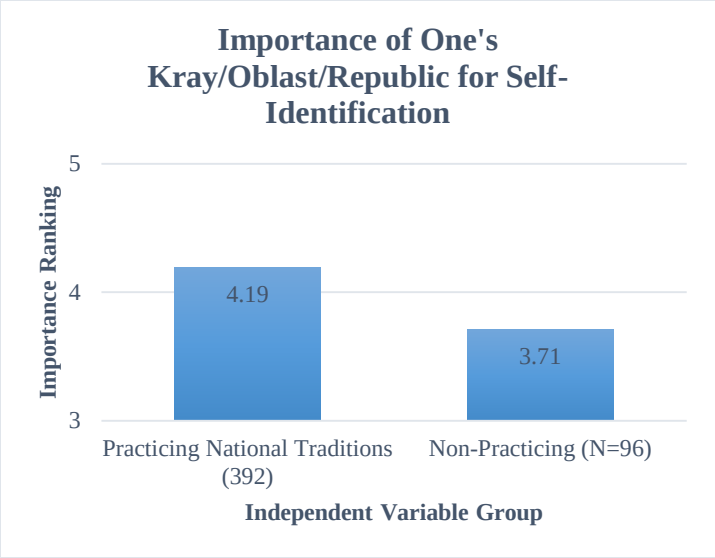

Figure 5.15 – Importance of *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic for Self-Identification between Participants Who Practice National Traditions and Those Who Do Not

The notion that Stavropol *Kray* acts as a context in which Russian national traditions and associated social norms was also present in interview data provided by participants who claimed to practice these traditions. According to Participant V033, a 26--year old Russian man from Stavropol, that claimed to practice Russian traditions:

> Stavropol is actually has a unique set of national traditions practiced by the ethnic Russian community. I would say that ethnic Russians here are like those in areas like Rostov and Volgograd, however there are a lot of other influences here, some of which are Slavic and some that are not Russian. In Stavropol, ethnic Russians have a unique understanding of what it means to be Russian because, not only have we been influenced by so many other cultures, we can also compare what it means to be ethnic Russian with other cultures. Culturally, I think ethnic Russians from Stavropol and Stavropol *Kray* are unique.

In the ethno-federal system, Stavropol *Kray*, as a majority ethnic Russian territory, could be understood in an exclusive sense by ethnic Russians, as a territory in which their groups' cultural norms are supposed to be considered as "in place," similar to the argument made by Participant V005 with Dargins and Dagestan. However, as Participant V033 eludes, Stavropol can be considered unique among majority ethnic Russian territories, due to its close proximity to non-

Russian areas and subsequent levels of transculturation that has occurred within Stavropol *Kray*, between ethnic Russian and non-Russian populations.

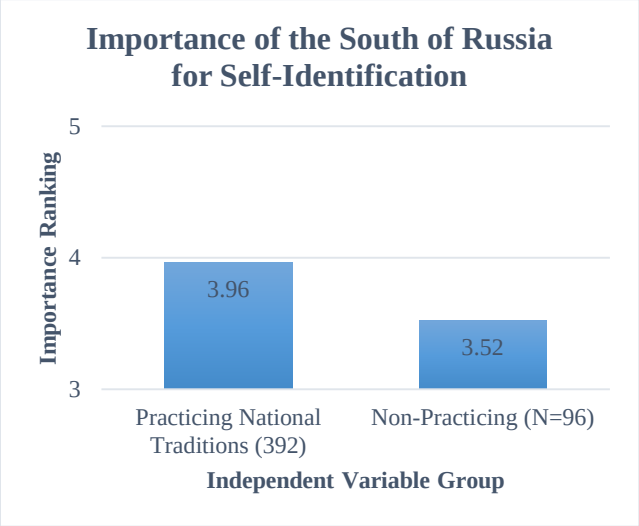

Figure 5.16 – Importance of South of Russia for Self-Identification between Participants Who Practice National Traditions and Those Who Do Not

Although a less popular choice among place-based dependent variables by participants overall, "The South of Russia" was also significantly more highly preferred by participants who practice their national traditions (mean = 3.96), than by those that do not (mean = 3.52). Because the idea of "The South of Russia" does not necessarily have to constitute a formal region, as long as one does not take the Southern Federal District as synonymous with the "South of Russia," participants in the study could potentially still prefer to think of themselves in connection with a more ambiguous conception of the South, as opposed to a formalized federal district based understanding. Because identity markers associated with the South of Russia tend to be cultural, and constructed in opinions to markers traditionally associated with Russia's federal center, or other regions of Russia, it is logical that participants who understood their traditions as "southern," and who also practiced those traditions, would preference "The South of Russia" as an identity marker.

In addition to preference for Southern Russian Culture in particular, interview participants who commented on their preference for the South of Russia, often mentioned that the North Caucasus was part of the South of Russia. The idea of the North Caucasus as a sub-region within the Russian South was also discussed by Participant V035, a 33-year old Russian woman from Stavropol who indicated that she practiced Russian national traditions:

> I identify with the idea of the South of Russia more than the other territories on the list. I want to think of myself as a Southern person. I am actually of the opinion that the North Caucasus Federal District is illogical. I think that the North Caucasus is part of the South of Russia because people there live similarly to other people in Southern Russia. Also, I consider the South of Russia to be among the most important regions in Russia. Therefore, this is all the South of Russia as far as I am concerned, and I would compare the South to the North, or Central Russia, but I do not believe that the South of Russia and the North Caucasus should be separated. There are sharper cultural differences and differences in mentality between Stavropol's populations versus Moscow, than the people of Stavropol versus the people of Krasnodar.

The comments of Participant V035 show a clear distain for the idea that the North Caucasus should be separated from the Russian South, as she believes cultural boundaries are more pronounced between the South and other regions, as opposed to her perceived cultural boundaries within the context of what she believes to be the South of Russian.

Significant Differences in Identity Preferences between Participants of Multi-National Backgrounds, versus Participants Whose Parents are of One Nationality

For the independent variable group "Mixed-Ethnicity," an independent variable based on whether or not participants identified their parents as being from the same ethno-national group, "Parents of the Same Nationality," versus participants who identified their parents being of different ethno-national groups, or "Parents of Different Nationality," showed significant differences in identity preference for two dependent variables: "Nationality" and "The South of Russia." The results show that participants with parents of the same nationality significantly

preferred nationality as an identity concept (mean = 3.57) to participants with parents of different nationality (mean 3.09). Participants with parents of the same nationality also preferred The South of Russian (mean = 3.95) to participants with parents of different nationality (mean = 3.51).

The fact that participants of a single ethno-national heritage would prefer "nationality" over participants with multi-national heritage is not surprising. Having parents of different nationalities presents the potential for a conflicted sense of ethno-national identity for someone in the North Caucasus. Although it is possible for him or her to identify with one or more nationalities, I expected other elements of identity to be more important for the "Parents of Different Nationality" group. Participant V006, an 18-year old man from Stavropol, of mixed-ethnic backgrounds, explained in his interview that he did not favor nationality as a concept. According to Participant V006:

> I am Russian, Ukrainian and Armenian by descent, but I was born and raised in Stavropol, so I live according to Russian traditions mostly. My parents were born around Stavropol, in some villages, I am not sure where exactly, but I was born here in the city … I would tell you that religion and nationality for are really not important at all, therefore I ranked them as '1.' I prefer to identify myself based on where I am from, the language that I speak, which is Russian and some Armenian, and my overall character as a person.

Although nationality was a concept that participants of mixed-national heritage were aware of, it was never their highest determining factor of identity in any of the interviews. A theme that was often present regarding this lack of preference for nationality among multi-national participants seemed to suggest disconnect between language usage/knowledge and group identity. Participant V034, a 30-year old man from Stavropol, who identified himself as Greek, despite having a mixed-ethnic background, offered the following comments:

> I understand that I am Greek in ways other than just language. For me it is a personal choice in how I identify myself, in how I behave, and I also rely on

> historical and family connections to Greece and Greek populations in the North Caucasus. I rely on historical connections to Greek populations in this region as source of my personal sense of identity, despite the fact that being Greek does not make me part of an established North Caucasus national group … I believe that everyone in the North Caucasus is Russian speaking to some degree, so the North Caucasus context should be important to us here.

This response from Participant V034 demonstrates the overall importance of national heritage throughout the North Caucasus regional in general. In cases of minority communities, with no official ethno-federal titular rights, such as the North Caucasus' Greek population, a link between ancestral residents and the contemporary community leads to a feeling of belonging to and within the region. This idea also supports the notion made by participant V006 earlier in this chapter about the importance of established communities and how a region might be an attractive place-based identity marker for non-Russian groups. The existence of historical Greek communities in the North Caucasus, in cities such as Yessentuki and Caucasian Mineral Waters, can draw on lineages, are firmly supported by archeological evidence Minns (2011). Interestingly, both participants V006 and V004 identified as having parents of different ethno-national groups.

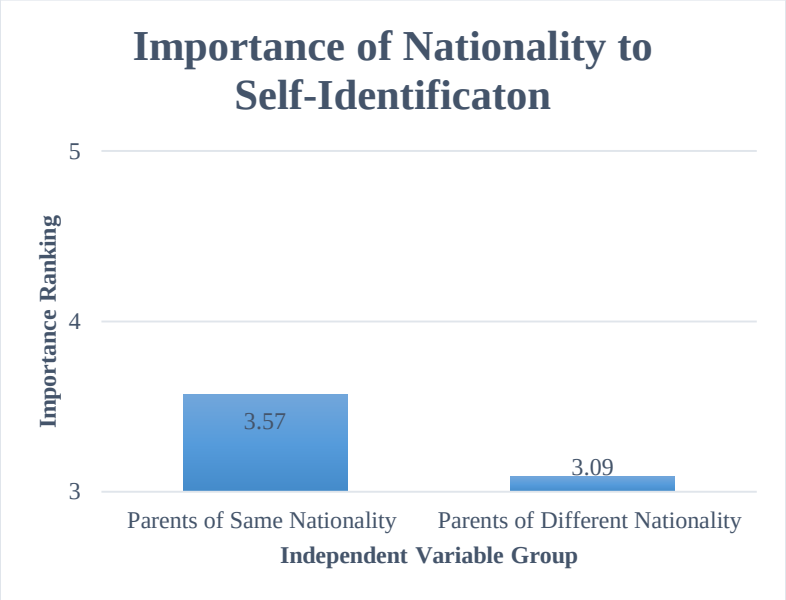

Figure 5.17 – Importance of Nationality for Self-Identification between Participants of Single and Multiple National Identities

Participants whose parents were of the same nationality also significantly preferred the dependent variable "the South of Russia," (mean = 3.95) to their multi-national counterparts (mean = 3.51). Interview data suggests that this preference could partially be due to the fact that since multi-national participants may lack the ability to fully rely on a defined concept of "Nationality" for their personal sense of identity, that they might prefer more formalized and defined territorial constructs. Participant V037, a 30-year old woman from Stavropol of mixed Armenian and Russian heritage offered the following comments:

> The South of Russia is arbitrary ... I prefer to associate myself to territories that have a more defined meaning. I understand the Russian Federation, and Armenia as being the homelands of my ancestors. I understand Stavropol *Kray* and also the city of Stavropol because I live here and can see the limits. I know where those things are. I do not think a conception like the South of Russia (*Yuzhnaya Rossiskaya*) is very structured or well defined, so I cannot really say that someone like me could call themselves Southern Russian and really have it mean much.

Participant V037 suggests the importance of homeland and historical association with regions and territories as important factors for identity. Although the previous comments for Participant V034 showed that he was more comfortable with a region, the North Caucasus and Greece, he still ultimately drew on connections to a homeland. Likewise, Participant V037 claimed associates to Armenia and Russia, both of which she was comfortable defining. Participant V037's comment on the South of Russia as "arbitrary," also shows a respect for defined borders and a preference to associate with a formal region, as opposed to a vernacular one. Her comment could also be used to show an ultimate respect for the authority of the Russian Federation, which ultimately has to power to draw sub-federal borders and decide how regional territories are administered. Therefore, reification though borders, and state institutions can be important, in some cases more so than a popular sense regional understanding which does neatly contextualize places and create a container with clearly defined limits. In the broader scope of this project, attitudes and understandings such as those held by Participant V037 show why it might be useful to formalize regions, should the state wish to create a firm set of limits and lines of inclusion and exclusion, and perhaps alludes to potential motivations for establishing the North Caucasus Federal District.

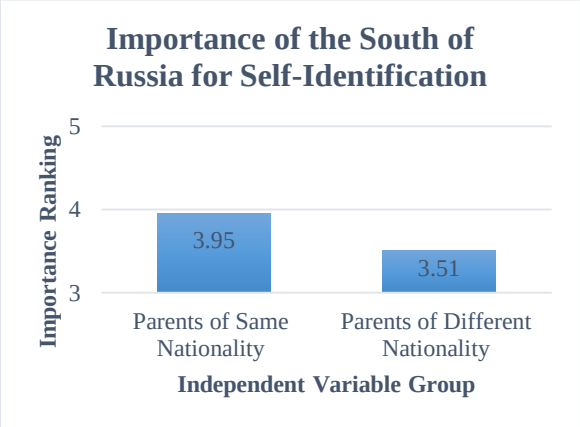

Figure 5.18 – Importance of South of Russia for Self-Identification between Participants of Single and Multiple National Identities

Significant Differences in Identity Preferences between Male and Female Participants

Preference patterns that I observed across most of the dependent variable throughout this study remained similar between male and female participants, except in one instance: "North Caucasus Importance to Federal Center." Although both gender groups ranked this dependent variable highly, agreeing that the North Caucasus region is important to the Federal Center, the Kruskal-Wallis test reflected a significant preference by women (mean = 4.45) versus the preference for this dependent variable by men (mean = 4.14).

Throughout the interviews, both male and female participants tended to note the importance of the relationship, however there were several interesting differences within the content trends between in the groups' interviews. Male participants tended to focus on the North Caucasus as a border region, security issues, and cultural differences, while female participants tended to mostly mention issues of economic development. According to Participant V024, a 30-year old Russian man from Stavropol:

> In any case, the North Caucasus is going to be important to the federal center because it constitutes an international border with foreign countries and governments. And, in general, the religion practiced there is Islam.

In this brief response, Participant V024 identifies the North Caucasus geographic location along the Russian Federation's southern border, along with suggesting that being an Islamic region, culturally different than greater Russia, would be cause for the federal center to pay attention to the North Caucasus. Participant V029, a 30-year old Nogay man from Stavropol, offered the following take on the importance of the North Caucasus to Russia's federal center:

> this region (the North Caucasus) garners a lot of attention because there is so much potential for social movements to get organized, based around a strong sense of national identity. The Federal Center might have to intervene in conflicts between two North Caucasus nationalities, or Moscow might have to deal with anti-federal separatist movements. This sort of uncertainty has become compartmentalized into

> the various areas in the North Caucasus. However, because of disconnects within local populations, the entire region has the potential to become unstable. Therefore the North Caucasus gets a lot of attention from the Federal Center as an entity, in and of itself.

Participant V029 also highlights cultural disconnect, in the form of potential social movements that the federal center might find undesirable, and security, in the form of political instability, as reasons for why the federal center should find the North Caucasus an important region.

Female participants were also aware of issues with conflict, however, their focus tended to be placed also on the economic attention that the North Caucasus commands from Russia's federal center in the form economic policy and resources allocation. Participant V028, a Nogay woman from Karachevsk, Karachay-Cherkessia offered the following take on the importance of the North Caucasus, highlighting the importance of federal attention for development, and the importance of development to avoid social unrest:

> If people have jobs, make a good living, and have something with which to occupy their lives, they are far less likely to resort to negative behavior and conflict. Therefore, the economy in the North Caucasus has to be improved, and the way the system works, the federal center controls how much it can improve … we (the North Caucasus) are important to the Federal Center because we have the potential to make them look very bad. If there are problems here, other regions of Russia may lose confidence in the overall power structure, and more problems would thus be created for the Federal Center.

Participant V028 points out the role of the federal center and government as having the responsibility to ensure development and economic stability throughout the entire country. Because the North Caucasus receives a lot of attention overall, failures in policy may cause other regions of the country to lose faith in Moscow's leadership. Therefore the North Caucasus might be seen as a potential political and economic liability within the greater Russian system of governance, in addition to being considered a threat to security.

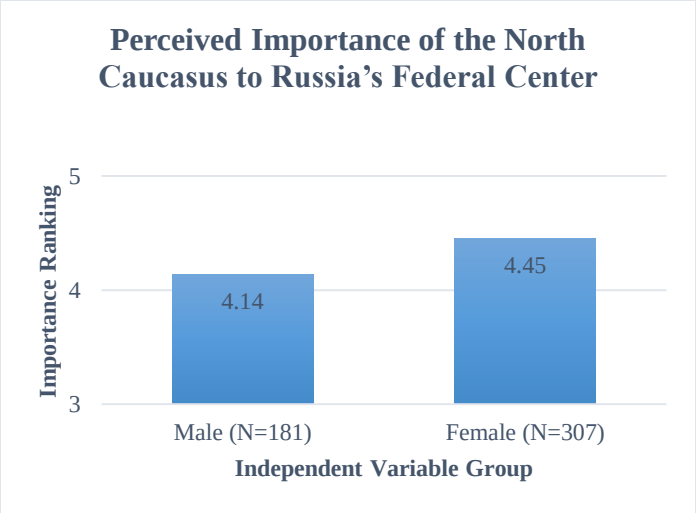

Figure 5.19 – Perceived Importance of the North Caucasus to Russia's Federal Center between Male and Female Participants

Significant Differences in Identity Preferences of Participants Practicing Religion, versus those Not Practicing Religion

The independent variable "Religion (Practice)," which is divided into a practicing group, made up of those participants who indicated that they followed a religion and also attended services or performed activities related to it regularly, and a non-practicing group, who either identified themselves as atheists, or indicated that they did not regularly attend places of worship or participate in religious activities. When analyzing this independent variable, I expected to find a significant difference (rejecting the null hypothesis of no difference), via the Kurskal-Wallace test between the two groups in regard to the dependent variable "Religion." The results confirmed my expectation as participants practicing religion significantly preferred religion as an identity marker (mean = 4.01) to non-practicing participants (mean = 3.46). A connection between preference of religion in one's personal conception of identity, and the practice of his or her religion would logically be related. However, it is interesting that, although non-practicing participants ranked "Religion" significantly lower by comparison, the mean score for the group

was still higher than 3, at 3.46. This result suggests that religion is still an important factor for identity in the North Caucasus, despite whether or not one chooses to practice.

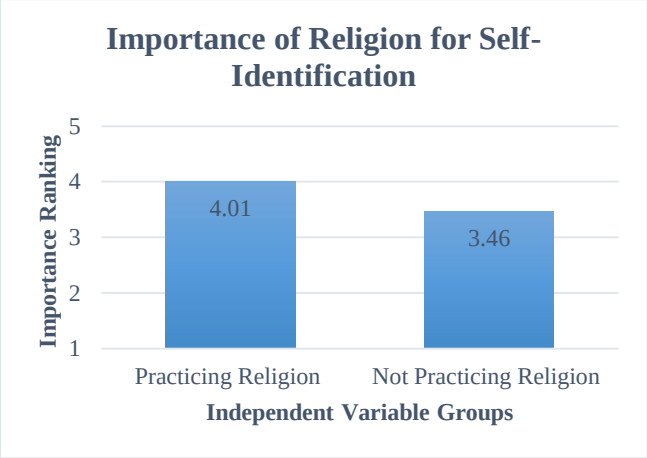

Figure 5.20 – Importance of Religion for Self-Identification between Participants Practicing Religion and Those Not Practicing

Significant Differences in Identity Preferences between Christians and Muslims

The most striking differences in results between group comparisons, among all of the various independent variables, were perhaps the significant differences between Christians and Muslims, the groups of the independent variable "Religion (Type)." In total, the responses regarding preferences for identity markers of Christians and Muslims differed significantly across nine of the dependent variables. In each case, Muslims ranked the variable higher than Christians. The results show that Muslim participants favored both conceptual and place-based identity markers more highly than Christians. In addition, the fact that Religion (Type) showed more significant differences between independent variable groups than the independent variable Nationality, whose groups were Russian and Non-Russian, suggests that religious identities could in fact constitute a more polarized way to understand societal division in the North Caucasus, as opposed to viewing the region purely in terms of ethno-federalism.

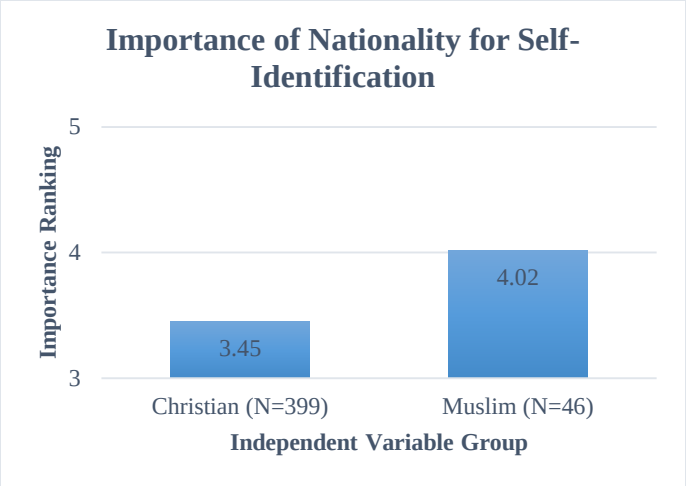

Figure 5.21 – Importance of Nationality for Self-Identification between Christians and Muslims

With a mean score of 4.02, Muslim participants favored the dependent variable "Nationality" over Christian participants, who registered a mean score of 3.45. This significantly higher preference for "Nationality" by Muslims versus Christians, along with a higher overall mean score for Muslims, suggests that for the Islamic nationalities of the North Caucasus overall, association with Islam means that one is more likely to also have a strong association with his or her religion. Interview data with Muslim participants tended so show that this group held the concept of nationality in high regard for a few reasons. First, several participants commented on the fact that traditionally Islamic nationalities tended to be very tight-knit in terms of their social circles. According to Participant V036, a 24-year old Nogay woman from Stavropol, who self-identified as a Muslim:

> I think nationality matters in Russian society because people of like nationality tend to group together. I think we can see this happen quite often in Stavropol, where the population is very ethnically diverse. Some Muslim communities tend stick together very closely.

Participant V027, a 29-year old Karachay woman from Teberda, Karachay-Cherkessia, who identified herself as a Muslim, offered the following comments:

> I believe that one's nationality does impact one's social status in the North Caucasus. In fact I would say that this concept is probably the most important element of social status in this Republic (Karachay-Cherkessia). However, in overall Russian society, I think nationality matters less if one does not live in such an ethnically diverse territory. Nationality affects social circles, and possible economic opportunities.

Both of these participants' comments suggest an awareness of National identity among traditionally Islamic Nationalities. Participant V027 suggests that Nationality is an important concept in Karachay-Cherkessia for social status, an idea that falls in line with rights afforded to titular nationalities in autonomous republics by the constitution of the Russian Federation. Nationality matters in Karachay-Cherkessia because Karachays and Cherkess are titular groups, whereas Nogays and Abazins are not, despite being non-Russian nationalities with established populations and histories in the territory that is today Karachay-Cherkessia. Participant V036 suggests that in a diverse multi-ethnic environment like Stavropol, national connections continue to matter for Islamic Nationalities.

Muslims favored the importance of Religion (mean = 4.48) to Christians (mean = 3.58). Interviews from Muslim participants overwhelmingly showed an awareness regarding Islam's importance, if not for the individual participant, but for his or her national group. Participants also commented on connections between Islam and their national traditions. According to Participant V025, a 30-year old Muslim Karachay man from Teberda, Karachay-Cherkessia:

> I only go to the Mosque on holidays. I have some relatives and friends who go more. Some of them go to the Mosque to pray every Friday. We have a tradition among Karachays, which might exist with other Muslim groups as well, that it is our parents' responsibility to make us go to the Mosque and participate until the age of 15. After 15, we are the ones who are sinning if we choose not to go to the Mosque. That is a tradition that is being brought back.

He then goes on to explain a generational difference within Karachay Society, in regard to Islam:

> My parents were raised in the Soviet Union, when it was not possible to go to Mosque at all. So, families have to be actively involved with Islam to make sure that such traditions are followed.

It is interesting that Participant V025 mentions both elements of personal and group responsibility in terms of the practice of Islam within the group overall. Family structure in relation to religious practice is also important, and Participant V025's attention to differences between Soviet times and contemporary Russia highlights the importance of Islam's resurgence among the various Muslim groups in the North Caucasus.

Similar themes can be seen in the interview of Participant V028, a 28-year old Nogay woman from Karachaevsk, also is also a Muslim:

> I always make sure to go to a mosque for holidays. I would really like to be more involved with the practice of Islam though. However, to be really dedicated to Islam, one needs a lot of time. Thankfully I have access to a mosque in Karachay-Cherkessia. That makes things easier. I suspect that Muslims in Stavropol probably practice less because they lack places of worship. One advantage that younger people have is that it is socially acceptable for us to practice. Our parents grew up in Komsomol, and Islam was not favored at all. So, in a way, we have to learn, or relearn what to do on our own. Some things (Soviet era mindsets) never went away.

While in agreement with Participant V025, but from a Nogay perspective, Participant V028 also brings up the importance of being able to access a Mosque. Muslims in Karachay-Cherkessia, and the other republics are freer to practice Islam with routine worship in Mosques, which is traditional among North Caucasus Islamic communities (Broxup, 1981). Stavropol's lack of an active mosque, and large variety of Orthodox Churches, perhaps serves to remind Muslims that they are living in an ethnic Russian federal territory.

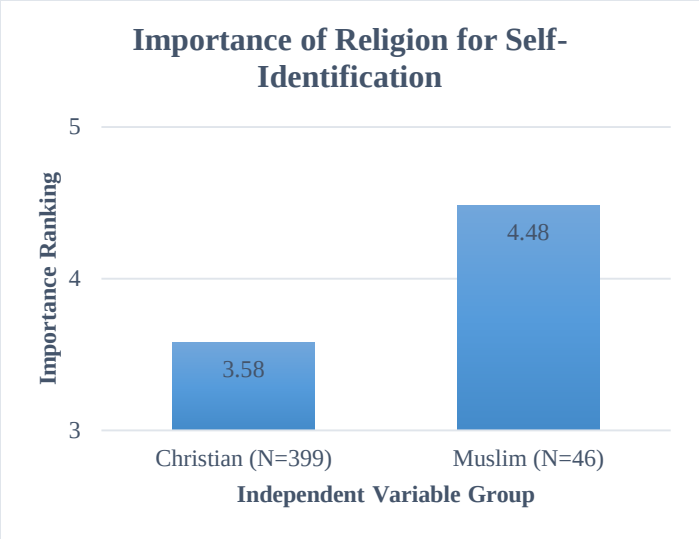

Figure 5.22 – Importance of Religion for Self-Identification between Christians and Muslims

Muslim participants showed a significantly higher preference for the dependent variable "Native Language" as important identity markers than Christians, whereby Muslims mean score for their native languages was 4.54, while the Christians' mean was 4.17. Interview comments by Muslim participants regarding their native languages generally showed strong emotions or connections and importance for languages, and were often also concise. According to Participant V005, a 33-year old Dargin man from Stavropol:

> I have to rank my native language, Dargin, as a 5 out of 5, which I would expect to be the case among all of the Islamic nationalities of the North Caucasus because I believe language and religion are really the two components that structure our lives and define us as unique groups of people.

The importance of language was an overall trend, perhaps one that should have been expected, and the fact that language is significantly more important among Muslim participants than Christians is more evidence of the generally stronger overall sense of identity and its importance for the various Muslim nationalities throughout the North Caucasus.

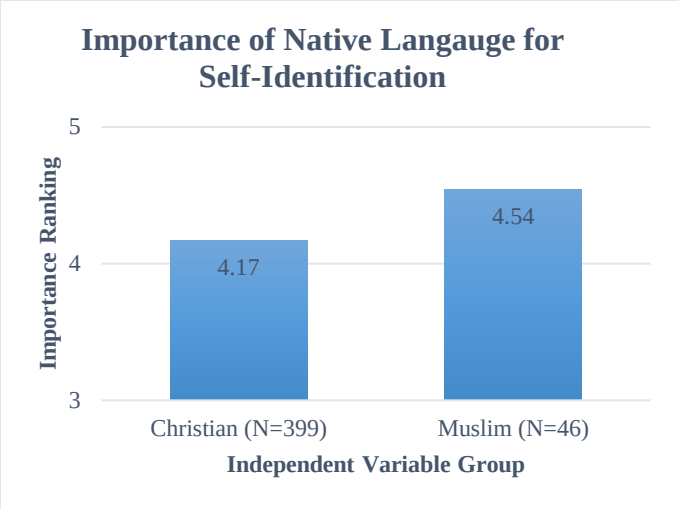

Figure 5.23 – Importance of Native Language for Self-Identification between Christians and Muslims

Regarding significant differences in preference between Muslims and Christians for place-based identity markers, Muslims' rakings of importance were higher for all of the regional scale markers. Differences between Muslims and Christians for the federal scale dependent variable "Russian Federation," and the local scale dependent variable "City/Village/*Aul*," were not significant, showing that Muslims more strongly associated with identity markers at the regional scale than did Christians.

Muslims ranked the dependent variable "Federal District" significantly higher than Christians, with a mean score of 4.17 to 3.91. Despite a ranking of nearly 4 by Christians, interviews from Christian participants tended to downplay the importance of the North Caucasus Federal District, as well as Southern Federal district. Christian participants tended to display confusion about, or disagreement with the formation of the North Caucasus Federal District. According to Participant V024, a 30-year old Christian man from Stavropol:

> The big difference is now, with the formation of the North Caucasus Federal District, Pyatigorsk has become much more important, as it is now a political center for this region. To me, it does not really makes sense to have to capitals in one region. Stavropol is the capital of Stavropol *Kray*, and Pyatigorsk is the capital of the North

> Caucasus Federal District. I think Stavropol should have just been the capital of all of it, since the districts were changed.

The idea that the North Caucasus Federal district is a political construct, defined with some kind of purpose in mind was also noted by some other Christian participants, but some seemed unfamiliar with the Federal District as a concept, such as Participant V033, a Christian man from Stavropol:

> The North Caucasus Federal District is not that important for me, likely because it is a new designation. Thinking about this area as the North Caucasus in general is more comfortable for me.

Here Participant V033 seems to prefer the idea of a vernacular concept of the "North Caucasus," rather than the formalized "North Caucasus Federal District."

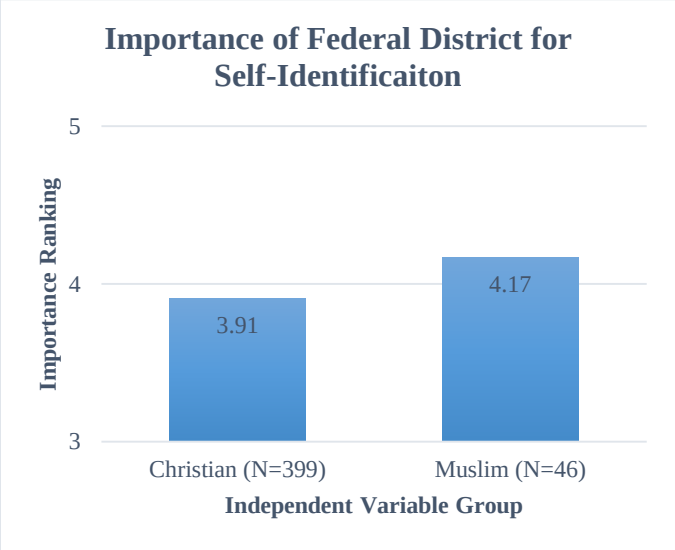

Figure 5.24 – Importance of Federal District for Self-Identification between Christians and Muslims

As with all of the territorially-based identity markers covered in this study that registered significant differences in the Kurskal-Wallis analysis, the dependent variable "North Caucasus," was also preferred by Muslims (mean = 4.52) to a higher degree than Christians (mean = 3.80). This trend makes sense based on interview data, as most of the participants tended to refer to

non-Russian national groups, who are predominantly Muslim, as "North Caucasus Nationalities (*Severnye Kavkazkye Natsionalnosti*)," suggesting a connection and sense of belonging of these ethno-national groups to the region.

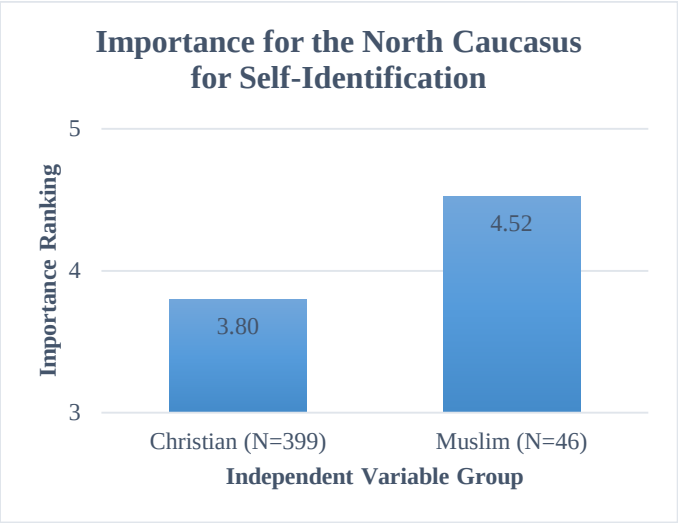

Figure 5.25 – Importance of the North-Caucasus for Self-Identification between Christians and Muslim

Muslim participants were very conscious of the fact that the North Caucasus region is majority Muslim, and that Islamic traditions continually play a role within the region. According to Participant V036, a Muslim woman from Stavropol:

> My religion (Islam) exists in practically every territory in the Russian federation, but in small concentrations. However, it exists in greater concentration in the North Caucasus than anywhere else, and the fact that Islam is the expected system of faith here has led the North Caucasus to be a region inside of Russia where Islam can be practiced to a greater degree than other religions.

An acknowledgement of transition of dominant religions, from Christianity to Islam was also discussed. According to Participant V029, a Muslim man from Stavropol:

> In terms of regional identity, I prefer to think in the context of the North Caucasus versus Russia beyond the North Caucasus. There are differences between northern and southern Russia of course, but the North Caucasus constitutes a blending of ethnic Russian and non-Russian peoples, as well as a shift from primarily Christian ways of life to communities who practice Islam as their main system of faith.

All of the Muslim participants commented on the importance of the North Caucasus to their identity to some degree, usually by noting the fact that Muslims communities are large in number and are widespread throughout the North Caucasus. Most of them noted discernible differences between the North Caucasus and areas of Russia further beyond the region, as highlighted by the comments of Participant V029.

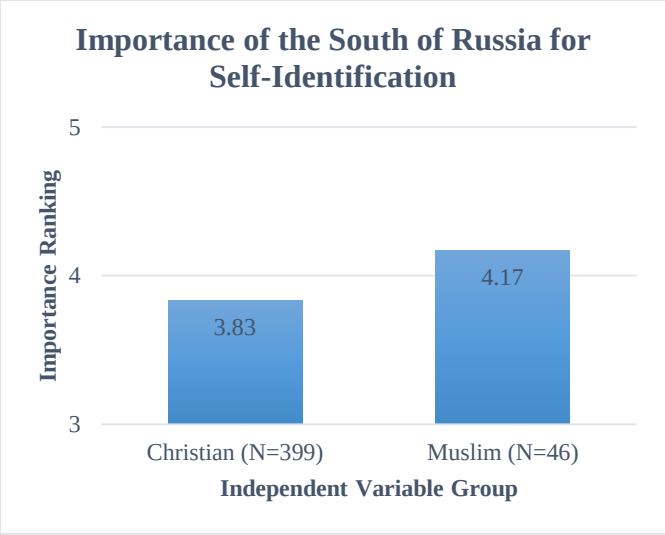

Figure 5.26 – Importance of South of Russian for Self-Identification between Christians and Muslims

Muslim participants ranked the dependent variable "South of Russia" (mean = 4.17) significantly higher than Christians (mean = 3.83). The interview data tended to show that Christian participants preferred to associate the South of Russia more as part of Russia, while Muslim participants tended to see the Russian South as more like the North Caucasus than other parts of Russia. The fact that Christians' preference for the South of Russia was slightly higher than for the "North Caucasus," while Muslims' preference for the South of Russia was slightly lower than for the "North Caucasus," suggests that the South of Russia is understood in milder sense as an identity marker overall. According to Participant V035, a Christian woman from Stavropol:

> I identify with the idea of the South of Russia more than the other territories on the list. I want to think of myself as a Southern person. I am actually of the opinion that the North Caucasus Federal District is illogical. I think that the North Caucasus is part of the South of Russia. Also, I consider the South of Russia to be among the most important regions in Russia. Therefore, this is all the South of Russia as far as I am concerned, and I would compare the South to the North, or Central Russia, but I do not believe that the South of Russia and the North Caucasus should be separated.

Participant V035's comments clearly suggest a perceived connection and scalar order to how the broader region should be identified, with the North Caucasus within the South of Russia.

While Christian participants tended to point out the North Caucasus as a part of Southern Russia, Muslim participants often said that the "South of Russia" as a concept was important to them because the North Caucasus was either part of, or similar to Southern Russia. According to Participant V005, a Muslim man living Stavropol at the time of the interview:

> I ranked the South of Russia a 4 because it is important to me and because the North Caucasus is part of Southern Russia. My home republic is Dagestan, but actually I prefer to live here in Stavropol, I like my life here better. However, my home *aul* is pretty important to me. If all things were equal, and I could build a business there, to the extent that such a business is possible in Stavropol, I would probably prefer to live there, in my *aul*, but Stavropol is as close to Dagestan in a cultural sense as one can find anywhere else in Russia.

Approaching the importance of the South of Russia from these varying perspectives again suggests the importance of the study area as a transition zone, not only between ethnic Russian and non-Russian space, but between dominant areas of Christianity and Islam.

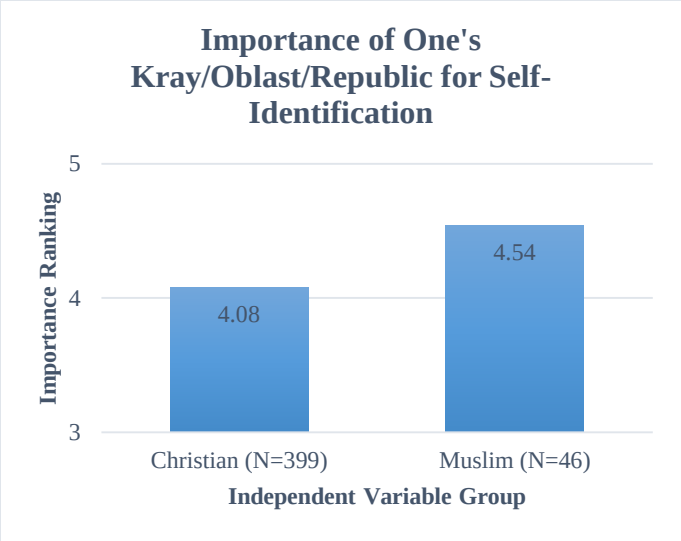

Figure 5.27 – Importance of *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic for Self-Identification between Christians and Muslims

Finally, Muslim participants also ranked the importance of their *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic (mean = 4.54) significantly more highly than Christian participants (mean = 4.08). This difference was expected to the principles of ethno-federalism, based on the idea that Muslim nationalities have autonomy in Republics, and are freer to practice Islamic cultural traditions within their Republics. Additionally, most of the Republics are designated for Muslim groups, with the expectation being North Ossetia-Alania. Additionally, in most cases, Republics are populated not only by traditionally Muslim titular nationalities, but also by minority groups who also practice Islam, such as the Nogays in Karachay-Cherkessia. Therefore, the republics constitute formalized territories where Islam can be considered in place.

Because so many significant differences in survey response distributions between Christians and Muslims were prevalent in the Kurskal-Wallis analysis, it is clear that members of these respective communities have different mindsets and priorities when it comes to forming constructs of identity. However, all of the significant differences between groups in this analysis are potentially important when it comes to further examining the North Caucasus's potential stability and role within the greater meta-geography of Russia. As Paasi (2003) suggests, the

two major ways that a region is typically viewed are through "identity of a region," referring to the area's cohesive nature in terms of cultural awareness, business activities, governance, political and religious distinctions, or though "regional consciousness," whereby people in the region identity with structures of expectations, institutions, symbols and discourses. According to Paasi (2003), if understandings regarding "identity of a region" and "regional consciousness" do not align, then said region is likely to be at odds with the state, at least to some degree. Because the survey data and analysis show how strong the population associates with various identity markers, and where significant differences exist in how these markers are understood, I will draw on it as a basis for interpretation regarding the mapping and interview data analyses in the following two chapters.

Chapter VI: Results of Cognitive Map Analysis

The cognitive mapping technique I developed and implemented for this project measured participants' opinions regarding the spatial salience of four dependent variables: "Native Language," "North Caucasus," "Religion," and "National Traditions." The following maps reflect the collective opinions of participants in the context of dependent variable groups based on biographical data and rankings of various independent variables from the survey data (see Chapter III), or present the spatial representation of data provided by the 2010 All Russia Census for the purposes of comparison and to establish base line expectations. I attempted to represent the following response maps as congruently as possible in comparison to one another, based on the limitations of ArcMap 10.3, with transparency of 99 percent for 100 participants was the goal. If a dependent variable group had more than 100 participants, I randomly selected 100 responses for analysis. If a dependent variable group had 50 participants, each polygon was shown at 98% transparency, and so on.

For the first part of the cognitive mapping analysis, I examined composite responses regarding "Language" and "National Traditions," to address whether or not members of the studies various ethno-national groups (Table 6.1) presented cohesive territorial understandings in terms of where these two variables were perceived to be salient. These composite maps also provided information that was useful to address the question of whether or not the various independent variable groups associated the salience of "Language" and "National Traditions" with official state territorial guarantees and borders, based on titular rights and status granted via Russia's ethno-federal system. Thus, my expectations were that the nationalities would indicate the territories in which their ethno-national groups had titular status, or notable presence in the population, as salient in terms of the use of their native languages and practice of their national

traditions. For example, I expected Karachays to indicate Karachay-Cherkessia as the territory in which these two dependent variables were salient. I expected ethnic Russians to select Stavropol *Kray*, Krasnodar *Kray*, Rostov *Oblast*, and so on.

Maps from ethnic Russians, of which I had an abundance, were also useful for addressing territorial understandings held by participants who also had strong preferences to associate with language and national traditions as concepts. I was able to compare maps of perceived Russian language salience from participants who ranked "Native Language" as a "5" in the survey, compared to those who ranked it as a "1." Similarly I was able to address potential trends with conceptual preference and territorial understanding with "National Traditions" by comparing responses for Map 4 from ethnic Russians who ranked "Nationality" with a "5" versus a "1."

While the composite maps show group perceptions intricately, I was also interested in comparing which territories were selected for cases in which I felt comparative analysis would be important. Therefore, in addition to visual analysis from the maps, I also tabulated the individual territories selected by participants in the independent variable groups. If a participant's response on the map selected any part of a given territory, then I counted said territory as a selection. While tabulating selections for individual territories did not take into account the exact territorial extents of each response, it did show whether or not a participant included said territory as a marker, versus omitting it. Thus, comparing these territorial selection results using a Chi-Square test allowed me to determine whether or not the patterns of selection between dependent variable group categories was statistically significant, therefore not occurring due to random change. For example, analyzing the Map 4 territorial selections made by ethnic Russians who ranked "Nationally" as a "5," versus a "1," would indicate whether or not ethnic Russians with strong preference for this identity marker were significantly more likely to claim

salience for their National Traditions in different territories compared to ethnic Russians who did not strong identity with "Nationality" as an identity marker.

The next part of this cognitive map analysis dealt with questions of how participants recognized and territorially define the North Caucasus region, concerning participants' responses to Map 2: "North Caucasus." I analyzed the collective territorial selections, with Chi-Square tests, and visual analysis of composite maps in five comparisons for Map 2, looking for differences in how ethnic Russians viewed the territorial extents of the region versus non-Russians, and how Christian participants viewed the region compared to Muslims. These first two comparisons were useful in examining how national and religious groups understood the extents of the region in terms of both similarities and differences. The final three comparisons were concerned with participants associations with territorial identity markers as concepts, in terms of how they viewed there the areal extents and territories included in the North Caucasus Region. I compared the responses from participants who ranked the Russian Federation as a "5" versus a "1," the "North Caucasus" as a "5," versus a "1," and "Federal District" (NCFD) as a "5" versus a "1."

The final part of the cognitive map analysis deals with Map 3: "Religion." I analyzed composite maps of Christians and Muslims to examine the overall perceived saliences of these three groups in terms of its own beliefs. I then conducted comparisons on perceived territorial salience of religion between Christians who had ranked "Religion as a "5" in terms of importance for identity, versus those who had ranked it as a "1." Conducting visual analysis on the composite maps and Chi-Square tests on the groups' selected territories was useful in showing how engagement with compared to perceived territorial salience. I then repeated this method with Muslims who had claimed to practice Islam, as opposed those who had self-

identified as non-practicing, looking at differences in territorial understandings in terms of engagement with the religion among its adherents. I chose to focus on the importance of Islam with this group, as the vast majority of Muslim participants had ranked "Religion" as a "5," thus I believed practice to be a more meaningful distinction.

Part I: Perceived Territorial Salience of Native Language and National Traditions

In part 1 of the cognitive map analysis, I examined the collective responses of seven ethno-national groups, determined by participants' self-identification via the survey. The groups included those from whom at least 4 individuals participated in the project, thus providing comparable data. These groups represent some of the largest ethno-national communities in the North Caucasus, and particularly in Stavropol *Kray*. My basic expectation of where the members of each national group would assume the salience of their native languages and practice of their national traditions was based on the most recent All Russia Census, from 2010. The participants were therefore expected to select the territories where their ethnic populations were represented, with the areas having the most representatives selected the most often. The composite maps from each group are normalized according to sample size via each induvial selection's level of transparency, so as to make each map as visually comparable to the others as possible, given the limits of Arc Map 10.3.

Table 6.1 – Variable Groups for Map 1 "Native Language"

Independent Variable Groups	**Dependent Variable**
Armenian (N=21)	Language
Dargin (N=8)	
Ingush (N=6)	
Karachay (N=8)	
Lezgin (N=4)	

Nogay (N=6)	
Russian Overall (N=399)*	
Russian - Language High Importance (N=256)*	
Russian - Language Low Importance (N=33)	

*N=100 Randomized for Composite Map Representation

Table 6.2 – Variable Groups for Map 4 "National Traditions"

Independent Variable Groups	**Dependent Variable**
Armenian (N=31)	Practice of National Traditions
Dargin (N=8)	
Ingush (N=6)	
Karachay (N=8)	
Lezgin (N=4)	
Nogay (N=6)	
Russian Overall (N=399)	
Russian - Nationality High Importance (N=129)*	
Russian - Nationality Low Importance (N=65)	
Russian - North Caucasus High Importance (N=173)*	
Russian - North Caucasus Low Importance (N=37)	

*N=100 Randomized for Composite Map Representation

Armenian Participants' Perceived Territorial Salience of Armenian Language and Practice of National Traditions

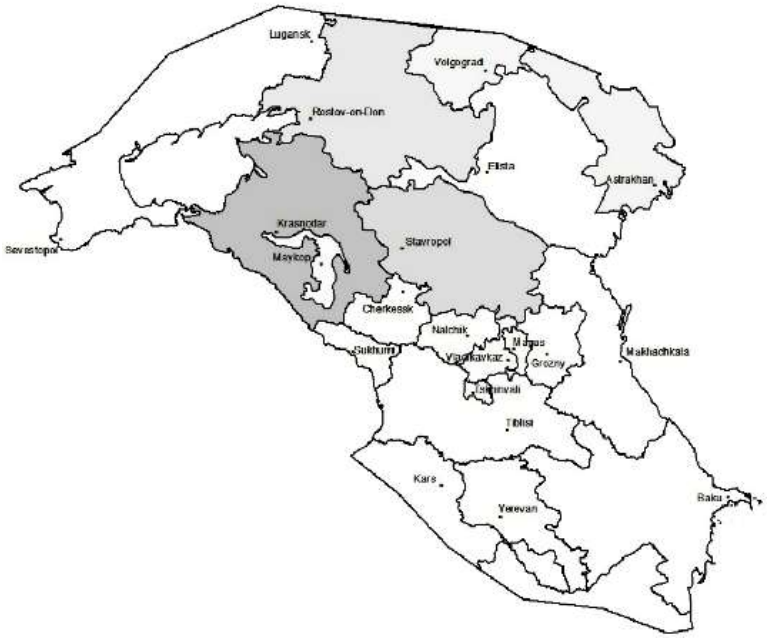

Figure 6.1 - Armenian Population based on the 2010 All Russia Census

I established expectations for how Armenian speakers might associate to the territories in which they believed their native language was spoken by taking population data available in the 2010 All Russia Census, and normalizing it according to the total Armenian population in the territories of the Russian Federation, represented at the scale of sub-federal territories, as seen in Figure 4.1. According to the projected census data, more Armenians are found in Krasnodar *Kray* (281,680) than any other Russian Federal Territory, followed by Stavropol *Kray* (161,324), Rostov *Oblast* (110,727), Volgograd *Oblast* (27,846), North Ossetia-Alania (16235) and Adygea (15,561). Therefore, I expected Armenian speakers' composite map of language salience to follow the basic pattern show in figure 4.2, along with territories indicated outside the borders of the Russian Federation, namely Armenia. I also expected to see Armenians select territories in Azerbaijan, namely indicating Baku and Nagorno-Karabakh, as both of these areas in Azerbaijan

have noted concentrations of ethnic-Armenian residents (see O'Lear and Whiting, 2008; De Waal, 2013).

Figure 6.2 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Armenian (N=31, 97% transparency)

The composite map of Armenian Speakers identifying the territories in which they believed their native language to be salient, seen here in Figure 6.2, did show some similarities to the expected results based solely on census data. We see the greatest concentration of responses centered in Armenia, as expected. When looking at the territories in the Russian Federation, the composite map shows that Armenian speakers tended to indicate the ethnic Russian titular territories in higher concentration than the North Caucasus Republics. However, some participants clearly indicated their belief that Armenian language was salient throughout the study area. Armenian speakers identified a high concentration, or "hot spot," around the city of Stavropol, which extended south to Stavropol *Kray*'s southern border, encompassing cities such as Pyatigorsk, Caucasian Mineral Waters, and Yessentuki, reflecting early Armenian settlement patterns of Stavropol *Kray* (Ioffe, Nefedova and de Beurs, 2014).

Surprisingly, Armenian speakers did not identify Nagorno-Karabakh or Baku in heavy concentration compared to Armenia and parts of Stavropol *Kray*. One participant who omitted these territories from her map was Participant V018, an Armenian speaker from Stavropol. During our interview, I asked her why she had indicated neither Nagorno-Karabakh, nor Baku on her map. According to Participant V018:

> Karabakh … I did not forget it, I just did not choose it. I do not consider Karabakh dialect to really be the same language (as the Armenian I speak). I have two native languages, Russian and Armenian. My mom is from Sumgait and dad is from Baku, but I was born in Russia. I choose territory where Russian is spoken and where Armenian is spoken. There are pockets of Armenians everywhere. I might have circled Tbilisi, or maybe Grozny, but I do not consider these major areas that would use Armenian language.

The response of Participant V018 suggests two important possibilities and trends for Armenian speakers in the Russian Federation. First, the young generation of Armenians, many born in the Russian Federation, speak Russian at a native level, and likely use Russian language as their primary language of communication, as nearly all of the Armenian speakers in the survey indicated. Therefore, when thinking about their own personal conception of native language, they may not lean entirely on Armenian as the basis for their linguistic identity. Second, her response demonstrates a break in identity between Armenians in Russia with Armenian populations in Azerbaijan. The fact that Participant V018 notes a break in linguistic affiliation with Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh, supported by the lack of indication of Nagorno-Karabakh on the maps of other Armenian speakers, definitely suggests that Karabakh and Baku Armenians' usage of the Armenian language is not understood as equivalent to the language being spoken in Armenian and Russia.

Figure 6.3 - Map 4: Perceived Territory where National Traditions are Practiced – Armenian (N=31, 97% transparency)

When indicating the territories where they believed their national traditions were practiced, Armenian participants produced an almost identical map to that which showed their perceived salience of Armenian language. This similarity suggests that Armenians strongly connected population, language, and traditions. Just as was the case on the Armenian language map, traditionally Armenian areas in Azerbaijan were not selected, further suggesting an identity disconnect between Armenian populations in Russia and Azerbaijan. Notably, Armenian participants constituted the only ethno-national group in the study not to show major differences between where they indicated the salience of their native language compared to where they believed their national traditions were practiced.

Dargin Participants' Perceived Territorial Salience of Dargin Language and Practice of National Traditions

The 2010 All Russia Census indicates major ethnic-Dargin populations in several territories in the Study area, including Dagestan (425,526), Stavropol *Kray* (35,018), Astrakhan *Oblast* (3,080), and the Republic of Kalmykia (5,327). As seen in Figure 6.3, Dargin populations exist in much higher concentration in Dagestan than in any of the other territories in the study area, although Stavropol *Kray* also has a sizeable Dargin community. Also, the trend for Dargins to move from Dagestan to villages in Stavropol *Kray* since the early 2000s, has worked to establish a network of chain migration leading to steadily increasing numbers for Stavropol *Kray*'s Dargin population (Kolosov, Galkina and Krindach, 2003). Therefore, I expected Dargin participants' responses to be most concentrated in Dagestan, but also to include at least some overlap into eastern Stavropol *Kray*.

Figure 6.4 - Dargin Ethnic Distribution by Sub-Federal Territory, based on 2010 All Russia Census

The composite map from Dargin participants does confirm my expectations regarding concentrations in Dagestan and Stavropol *Kray*. As visible in Figure 6.3, Dagestan was clearly selected as more salient for the prevalence of Dargin language than any other territory. Stavropol *Kray*, as expected, appears to be the second most selected territory. However, I found it somewhat surprising that Dargin participants selected the central portion of Stavropol *Kray*, as opposed to the eastern portion of the territory, closer to Dagestan. Also, surprising was the fact that the study area's northern portion was selected, despite the low numbers of ethnic-Dargins, and therefore presumably Dargin language speakers, in these sub-federal territories. Since the participants conducted the map analysis in Stavropol, it is likely that they had come from Dagestan to study at one of the universities in the city, and might not be in touch with Dargin migrants in eastern Stavropol *Kray*. The perceived presence of Dargin Language outside of Dagestan illustrates the belief that Dargins have migrated out of the republic and into other territories. As previous work on Dargin migration has suggested, available land in Eastern Stavropol *Kray* has been an attractive pull factor for members of the group, as economic conditions in Stavropol *Kray* are generally better than in Dagestan, and family groups and individuals can retain cultural connections with Dargin populations in Dagestan due to Stavropol *Kray*'s close proximity to the republic (see Ioffe, Nefedova and de Beurs, 2014; Foxall, 2012.) However, the results from Dargins' perceived language salience seem to indicate that these participants see their population as having expanded further than Eastern Stavropol *Kray*. Such a belief is potentially important for those families and individuals considering potential migration destinations, if they consider language as an important factor.

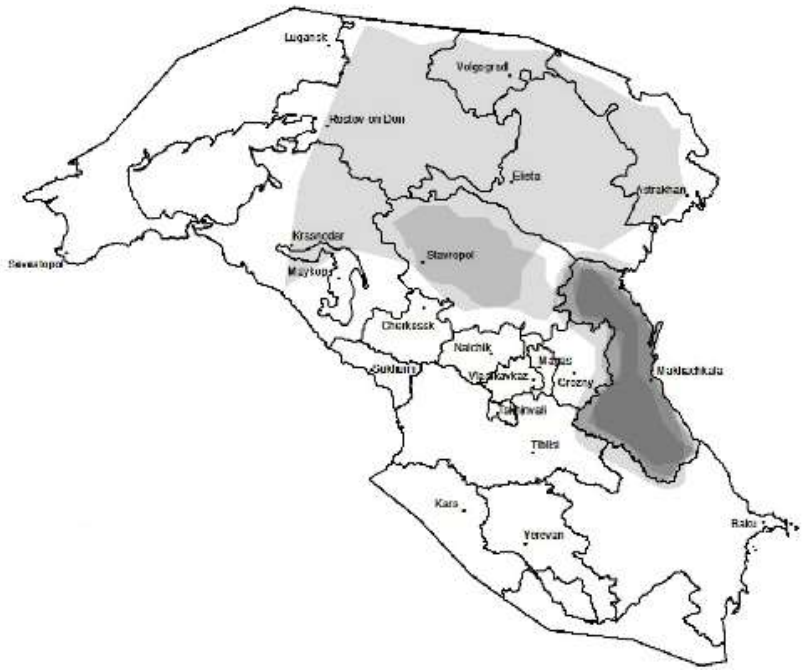

Figure 6.5 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Dargin (N=8, 86% transparency)

In terms of Dargin participants' perceived practice of national traditions, there were a few differences when compared to the map of Dargin language salience. First, the concentration of responses for national traditions were slightly lighter in Dagestan, although it remained almost the same for Stavropol *Kray*. Also, the scope by which Dargin participants viewed the practice of their traditions was much wider than where their language was salient, as it extended into Chechnya, as well as beyond the North Caucasus into Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and Iran.

Many Dargin traditions are connected to Islam, which is also the case with many of the Islamic ethno-national groups in the North Caucasus (Henze, 1995). The trend that Dargin participants expanded their scope on national traditions particularly to areas commonly associated with Islam could be evidence of a perceived identity connection between specifically national traditions and traditions that Dargins potentially have in common with other Muslims.

Figure 6.6 - Map 4: Perceived Territory where National Traditions are Practiced – Dargin (N=8, 86% transparency)

Ingush Participants' Perceived Territorial Salience of Ingush Language and Practice of National Traditions

Ingush populations were listed as noteworthy population in Ingushetia (385,537), North-Ossetia-Alania (28,336) and Chechnya (1,296), according to the 2010 All Russia Census. Therefore the results I expected regarding the perceived salience of Ingush language among Ingush speakers were a heavy concentration in Ingushetia, followed by a smaller concentration in North Ossetia-Alania, followed by a few indications of Chechnya, as indicated by Figure 6.7.

Figure 6.7 - Ingush Ethnic Distribution by Sub-Federal Territory, based on 2010 All Russia Census

While Ingush speakers did display their greatest concentration of map selections in Ingushetia, particularly around the capitol, Magas, they actually chose Chechnya as the second most popular territory for the salience of Ingush language, as Figure 6.7 displays. Despite having a great concentration of Ingush people in North Ossetia-Alania, this territory was not at all favored by Ingush participants in regard to their language. Possibly, their propensity to select Chechnya points to the fact that contemporary Chechnya and Ingushetia were part of the same territory, the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, during Soviet times. Therefore, Ingush participants could have associated their ethno-national group with the historical connections to the combined territory, thus assuming their language would still be spoken in Chechnya. However, the 1,296 Ingush in Chechnya, per the census, constitutes only 0.1 percent of that republic's population.

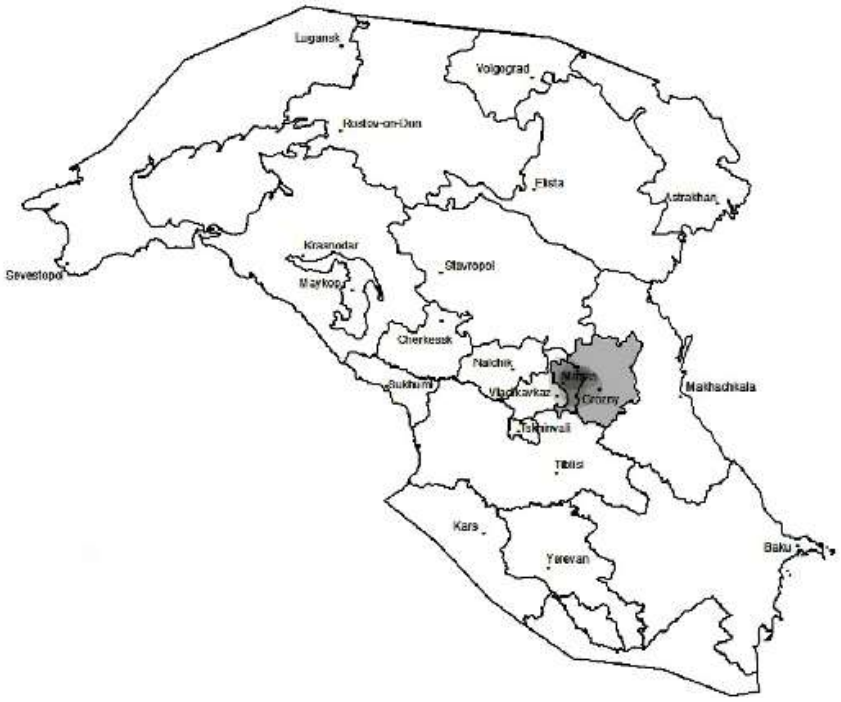

Figure 6.8 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Ingush (N=6, 83% transparency)

As was the case regarding Dargin participants' maps, Ingush participants also widened their scope concerning the practice of their national traditions in comparison to the salience of Ingush language. The Ingush selection range for national traditions, as seen in Figure 6.8, includes most of the mountainous areas of the North Caucasus, along with South Ossetia and parts of Georgia proper, and east to Makhachkala in Dagestan. Also included were the mountainous areas of Southern Stavropol *Kray*. While Ingushetia retained the highest concentration of selections of any individual territory, the trend from the Ingush language map, to select Chechnya over North Ossetia-Alania, was also present on the Ingush map for perceived practice of national traditions. I expected some Ingush participants to select Chechnya because the two contemporary republics of Ingushetia and Chechnya existed together as one during Soviet times. Such a result goes against the logic of the Russian census, which displays higher Ingush populations in North Ossetia. Therefore, the lack of selections for North-Ossetia Alania

did not follow my expectations, based on the census. Although, the omission of North-Ossetia Alania in such a small sample size likely reflects the fact that the six Ingush participants simply lacked experiences with the territory. However, one alternative explanation for this lack of connection between Ingush participants and North-Ossetia Alania could be the religious disconnect between Ingushetia and North-Ossetia Alania, Ingushetia being majority Muslim, and North-Ossetia Alania being majority Christian. Another explanation might be that Ingush simply perceive a lack of difference between their group and the Chechens. In any case, these map results clearly go against expiations suggested via empirical census data and demonstrate a potential disconnect between local beliefs and official statistics.

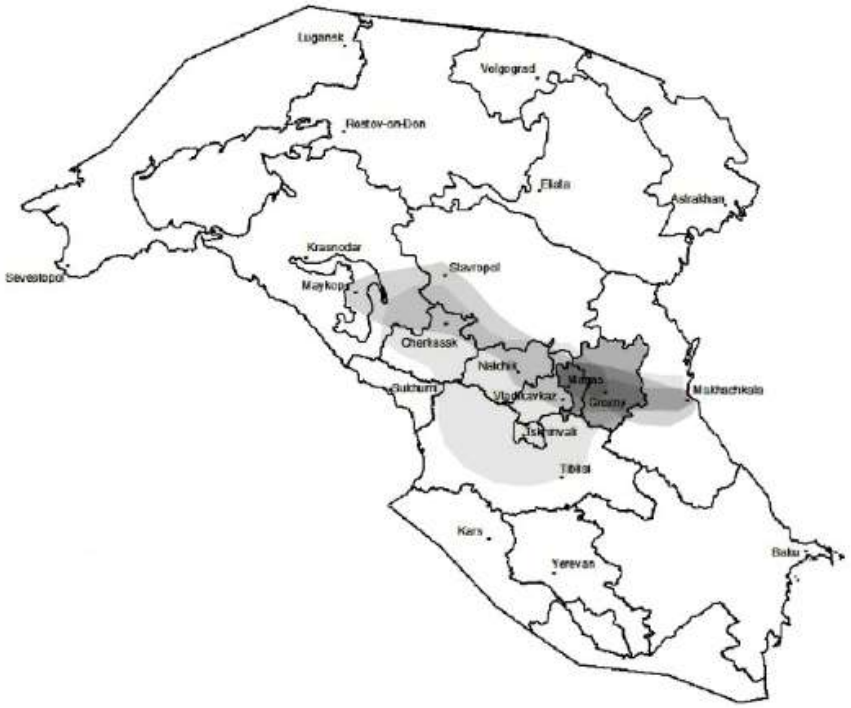

Figure 6.9 - Map 4: Perceived Territory where National Traditions are Practiced – Ingush (N=6, 83% transparency)

Karachay Participants Perceived Territorial Salience of Karachay Language and Practice of National Traditions

The territories with noteworthy populations of Karachays, as indicated by the 2010 All Russia Census, were Karachay-Cherkessia (149,655), where Karachays constitute a titular group, and Stavropol *Kray* (8,700). The expected result, demonstrated by Figure 6.9, is to have Karachay speakers select Karachay-Cherkessia in a noticeably higher concentration than Stavropol *Kray*, without selecting much area in additional territories.

Figure 6.10 - Karachay Ethnic Distribution by Sub-Federal Territory, based on 2010 All Russia Census

Karachays, as expected, did indicated Karachay-Cherkessia the most when indicating their perceived salience of Karachay language. However, their overall collective scope of responses was far wider than the expected results, based solely on the census data. Participants selected neighboring Kabardino-Balkaria with the next highest frequency, followed by Stavropol *Kray*, then Krasnodar *Kray*, and then all of the additional Russian Federal territories in the study area. The propensity to select Kabardino-Balkaria for Karachay language, despite this territories small Karachay population, is explained by Participant V027, a Karachay native speaker:

> For language I selected Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria because the Karachay and Balkar languages are fundamentally the same. Karachay and Balkar are just separate dialects, we can understand each other without any problem at all.

This participant's attitude toward the similarities of the Karachay and Balkar languages is interesting because it is strikingly opposite to how Armenian participants tended to feel about Armenian speakers in Azerbaijan. While Karachays and Balkars, although closely related both linguistically and historically, they were officially classified as separate nationalities in the Soviet period, and remain so in the context of the Russian Federation (Boeschoten, 1998) (Cornell, 1997). However, Participant V027 notes a very close association between these officially different groups, while claiming Karabakh Armenian as a separate dialect was enough for Armenian speakers not to select Nagorno-Karabakh on their language salience maps.

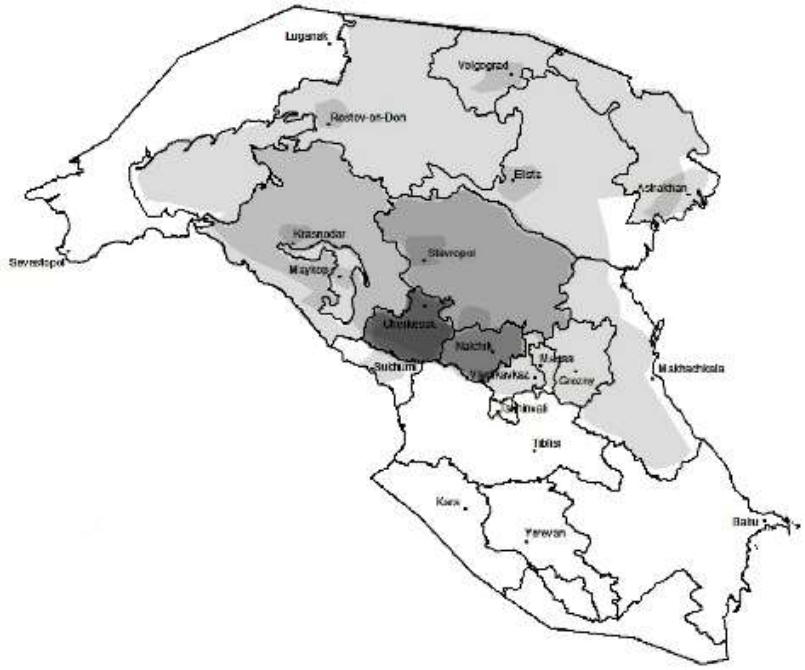

Figure 6.11 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Karachay (N=8, 86% transparency)

When selecting territory where Karachay national traditions were perceived to be in practice, Karachay participants still concentrated their selections on Karachay-Cherkessia,

followed by Kabardino-Balkaria, then Krasnodar *Kray*, Adgeya, Dagestan and a small section of Stavropol *Kray*. Kalmykia was not selected for Karachay national traditions, although it had been for language. Also, as was the case with the map showing the practice of Dargin national traditions, Karachays, expanded the scope of form their language salience map to include more territories to the South. In this case, the map for Karachay national traditions shows selections in Azerbajian and Iran.

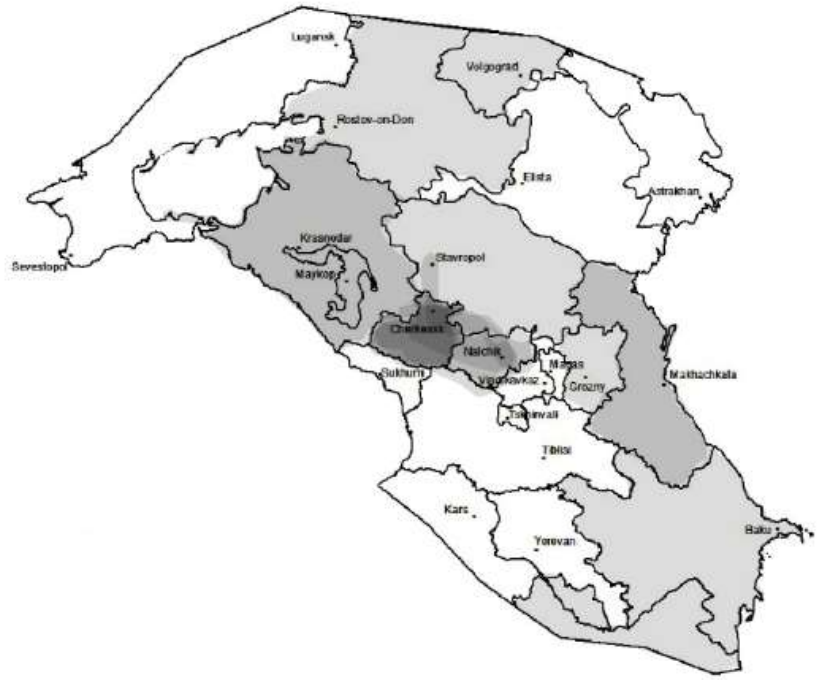

Figure 6.12 - Map 4: Perceived Territory where National Traditions are Practiced – Karachay (N=8, 86% transparency)

This selection pattern for the perceived practice of Karachay national traditions is explained by Participant V025 a 30-year old Karachay man from Karachaevsk. According to Participant V025:

> I think wherever Karachays live, Karachay national traditions also exist. However, I think our national traditions are probably more prevalent here in Karachay-Cherkessia. It is harder for Karachays in other parts of Russia to practice because they are small in number, and they cannot get access to the items they would need to

> cook our foods, or maybe they do not have a Mosque where they live. So, our traditions are a lot brighter here where Karachays live in concentration.

Again, this participant, a member of a traditionally Islamic ethno-national group, suggests a connection between Islamic traditions and Karachay national traditions, offering a potential explanation for the wider scope for perceived practice of national traditions compared to Karachay language salience.

Lezgin Participants' Perceived Territorial Salience of Lezgin Language and Practice of National Traditions

The 2010 All Russia Census indicated noteworthy populations of Lezgins in Dagestan (387,746) and Astrakhan *Oblast* (3,187). Because the overall number of Lezgin residents for Dagestan is so much greater than in the other territories in the study area, I expected participants' perceived scope of language salience and practice of national traditions to also be heavily concentrated in Dagestan, with few indications outside of the republic.

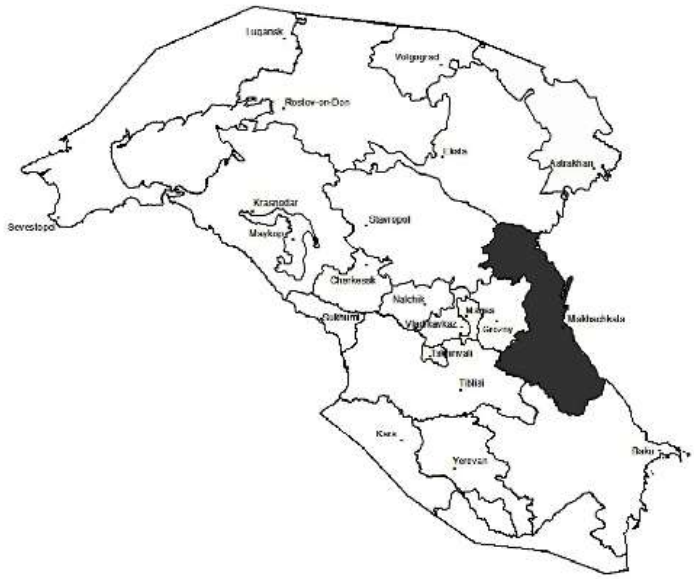

Figure 6.13 - Lezgin Ethnic Distribution by Sub-Federal Territory, based on 2010 All Russia Census

Participant responses regarding the salience of Lezgin language did show the highest concentrations in Dagestan, as expected. However, the scope of participants' selections consistently also expanded to include territory in Chechnya and Ingushetia. In terms of areas where Lezgin participants indicated that they believed Lezgin national traditions were practiced, the scope was widened to include the southern areas of Stavropol *Kray*. It is interesting to note that, as was the case with Ingush and Dargin participants, Lezgins selected parts of Stavropol *Kray*, the mountainous portions in particular, for the practice of national traditions, but not for language salience.

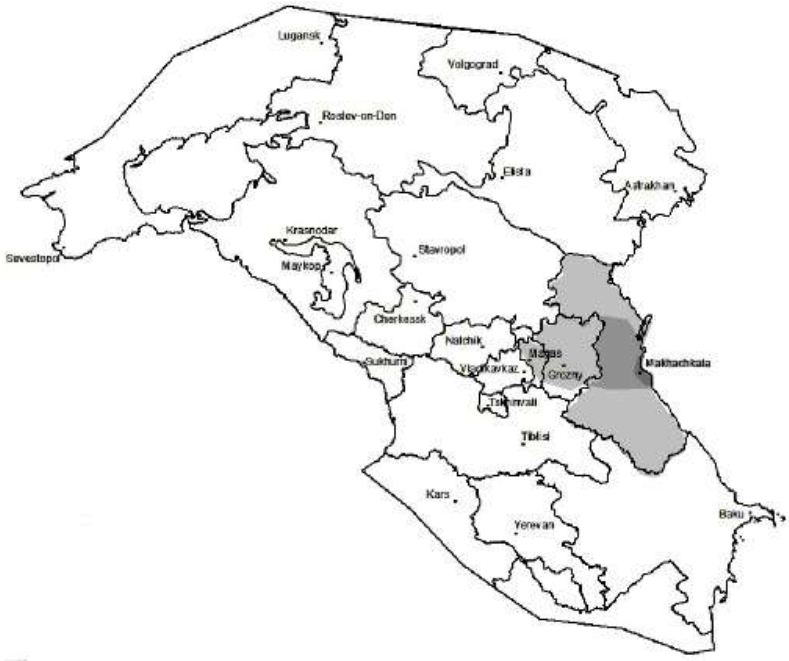

Figure 6.14 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Lezgin (N=4, 75% transparency)

Figure 6.15 - Map 4: Perceived Territory where National Traditions are Practiced – Lezgin (N=4, 75% transparency)

Nogay Participants' Perceived Territorial Salience of Nogay Language and Practice of National Traditions

I expected Nogay participants to indicate the heaviest concentrations of territorial selections for their perceived language salience and practice of national traditions in Dagestan, and also include concentrations in Stavropol, Karachay-Cherkessia, Chechnya and Astrakhan *Oblast*. As is the case with all of the ethno-national groups in the study, I based the expected results on the 2010 All Russia Census, which cites Stavropol with 20,680 Nogay residents, Dagestan with 38,168, Karachay-Cherkessia with 14,873, Astrakhan *Oblast* with 4,570 and Chechnya with 3,572 Nogay residents respectively.

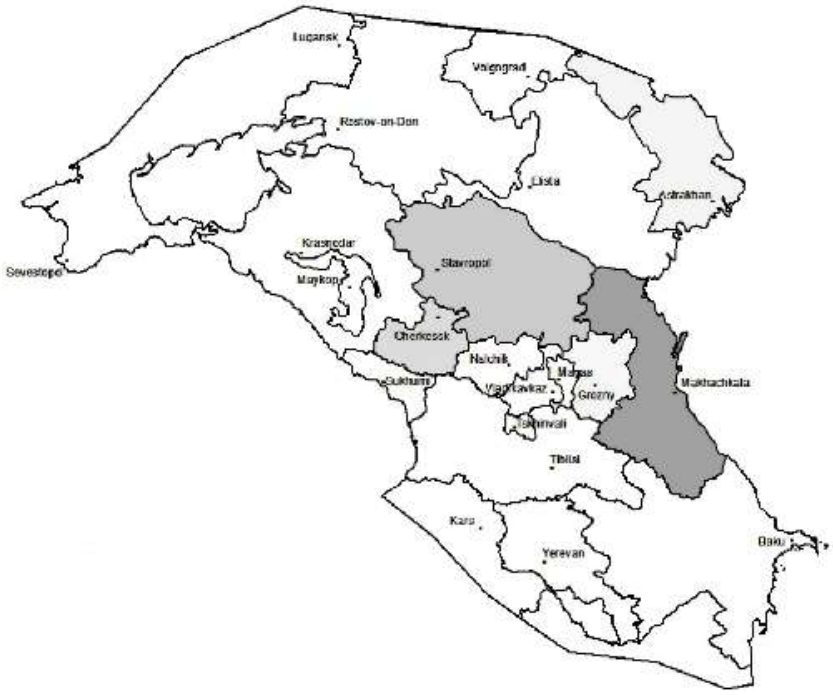

Figure 6.16 - Nogay Ethnic Distribution by Sub-Federal Territory, based on 2010 All Russia Census

Nogay participants' selections for territories in which their native language was salient in that it did follow expectations somewhat, although Stavropol *Kray* received the highest concentrations, slightly more than Dagestan. However, the scope of Nogay language salience extended well beyond the borders of the Russian Federation, as Nogay participants selected Ukraine, as well as Turkey and Iran. However, the South Caucasus countries were not selected for perceived Nogay language salience.

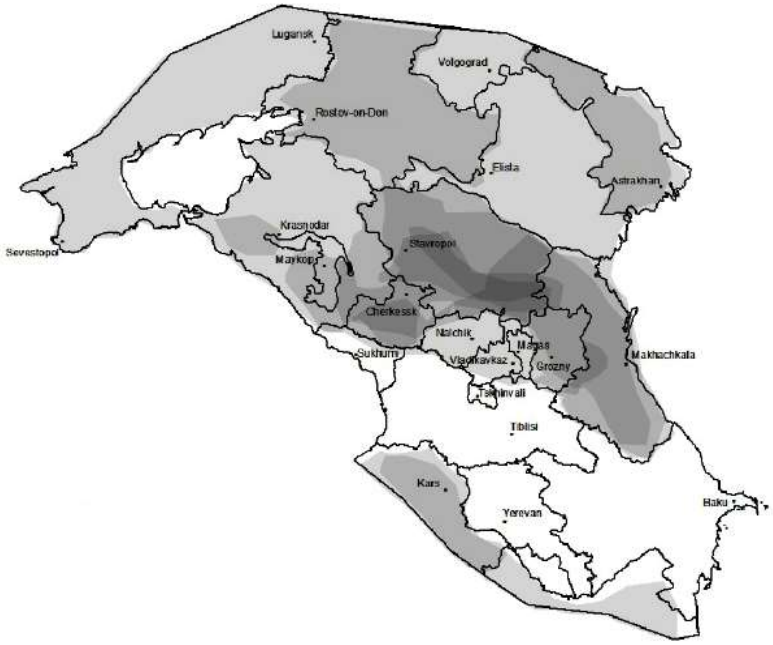

Figure 6.17 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Nogay (N=6, 83% transparency)

Interestingly, when Nogay participants mapped the areas of the study area where they believed their national traditions were practiced, several areas which had been selected for language salience did not appear. While a heavy concentration of selections was present from Karachay-Cherkessia through southern Stavropol *Kray* and into Dagestan, similar to the trend in the Nogays' language map, areas in Rostov *Oblast*, Volgograd *Oblast*, and Kalmykia did not appear. Additionally, Iran was not selected for national traditions. Again, connection between Islamic tradition and ethno-national traditions may have had to do with these omissions. All of the Russian federal territories dropped on the Nogays' traditions map, which had been present on the language are populated with Christian majorities.

Understanding the differences in identity between Shia and Sunni traditions, combined with separation between language and traditions again illustrates the connections between Islamic and national traditions in the traditionally Muslim ethno-national groups of the North Caucasus.

Figure 6.18 - Map 4: Perceived Territory where National Traditions are Practiced – Nogay (N=6, 83% transparency)

Ethnic Russian Participants' Perceived Territorial Salience of Russian Language and Practice of National Traditions

The expected selections for native language salience and areas were national traditions were practiced for ethnic Russians was also based on data from the 2010 All Russia Census, which indicated Russian populations in much heavier concentrations in the study area's *kray*s and *oblast*s than in the republics. According to census data, Krasnodar *Kray* had 3,769,840 ethnic Russian residents, followed by Rostov *Oblast* (3,224,031), Volgograd *Oblast* (1,951,035), Stavropol *Kray* (1,861,485), Astrakhan *Oblast* (511,951), Adygea (224,144), Kabardino-Balkaria (162,275), North Ossetia-Alania (122,860), Karachay-Cherkessia (124,511), Kalmykia (70,721), Chechnya (22,600), and Ingushetia (2,861). However, since Russian is an official language in all of the territories in the Russian Federation, and is also widely spoken in the other former Soviet

Republics shown in the study area, I expected at least some concentration of selections for language and traditions to be everywhere on the template map.

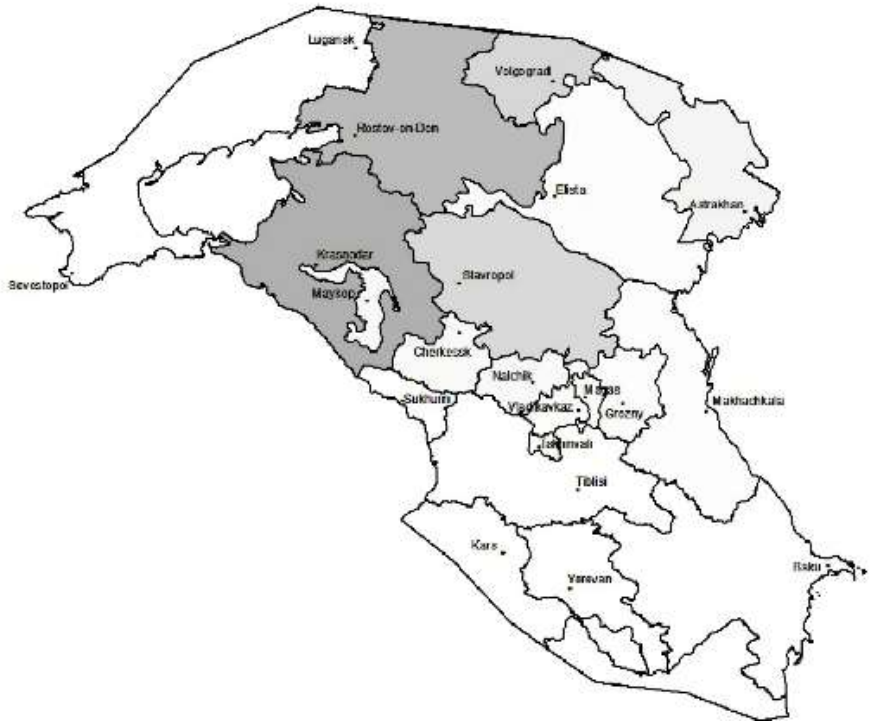

Figure 6.19 - Ethnic Russian Distribution by Sub-Federal Territory, based on 2010 All Russia Census

Ethnic Russian participants' responses did follow my expectations quite closely. The map for Russian language salience does show heavier concentrations for the territories with majority ethnic Russian populations, along with greater concentrations in the Russian Federal territories, followed by the former Soviet Republics, followed by territory in Turkey and Iran. This trend represents essentially what I had expected to observe.

Figure 6.20 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Russian (N=100, 99% transparency)

When looking at ethnic Russians' collective map regarding the areas where they perceived Russian national traditions to be practiced, the expected trend of heavier concentration of selections in majority ethnic Russian territories is still present. However, the difference in shading between the majority ethnic Russian territories and the other territories is much sharper. The ethnic Russian participants therefore clearly, as a group, recognized a difference between language and practice of traditions.

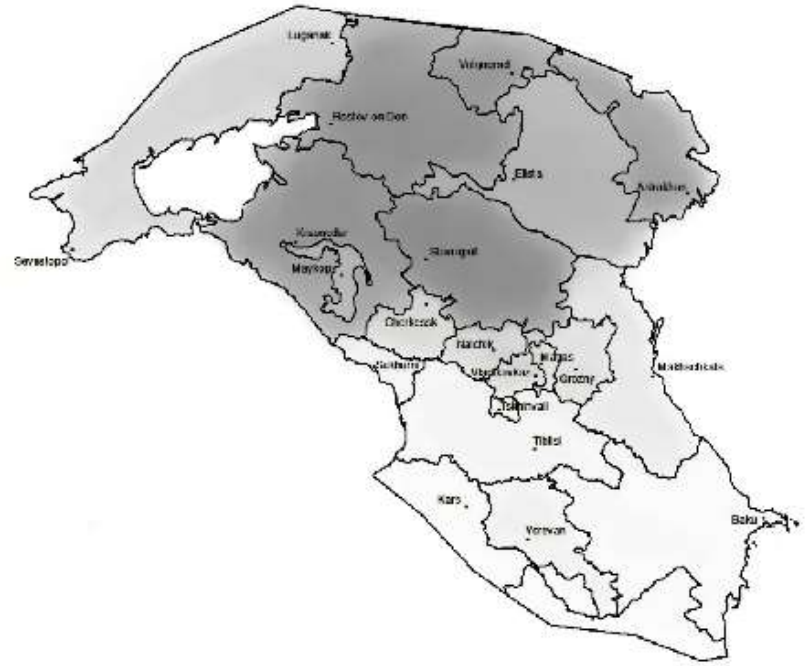

Figure 6.21 - Map 4: Perceived Territory where National Traditions are Practiced – Russian (N=100, 99% transparency)

Comparing Importance of Language for Identity to Language Salience Selections by Ethnic Russians

When conducting a visual comparison between maps of perceived language salience between ethnic Russian participants who identified strongly with Russian language as a personal factor for their identity, thus rating it a "5" in the survey data, against ethnic Russian participants who claimed that language was not at all an important factor for them, thus rating their native language as a "1" on the survey, some differences in these groups' respective maps appear immediately. First, ethnic Russian participants who strongly identified with Russian language were much more selective with the territories they chose to identify on their maps. Conversely, those who did not strongly identify with the Russian language approached this map with a much wider scope of territories overall.

Figure 6.22 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Russian; Language Importance 5 (N=100, 99% transparency)

Another major visual difference between these two maps is that participants who did not strongly identify with language selected Ukraine, the South Caucasus countries, Turkey, and Iran noticeably more frequently than ethnic Russian participants who strongly identified with their native language. The selection of the North Caucasus republics was also slightly more concentrated in the composite map of ethnic Russians who did not strongly identify with their native language.

Figure 6.23 - Map 1: Native Language Salience – Russian; Language Importance 1 (N=33, 97% transparency)

In order to determine whether or not ethnic Russian participants showed a significant propensity to make territorial selections on language salience, based on their personal perceptions of the importance of Russian language to their own sense of identity, I conducted a Chi-Square test for the selections made by these two groups, which allowed me to determine whether the selections made by the two groups significantly different, as opposed to having differences that occurred randomly. The analysis showed a significance value of 0.00, indicating that the territorial scope of selections regarding the salience of Russian language included significantly more territory than the collective selections made by ethnic Russians who strongly identified with their native language. In other words, ethnic Russians who claimed to strongly identify with the Russian language were significantly more likely to consider Russian language less salient, both in non-Russian majority territories within the Russian Federation, as well as in Russia's near abroad, than ethnic Russians who did not strongly identify with their language.

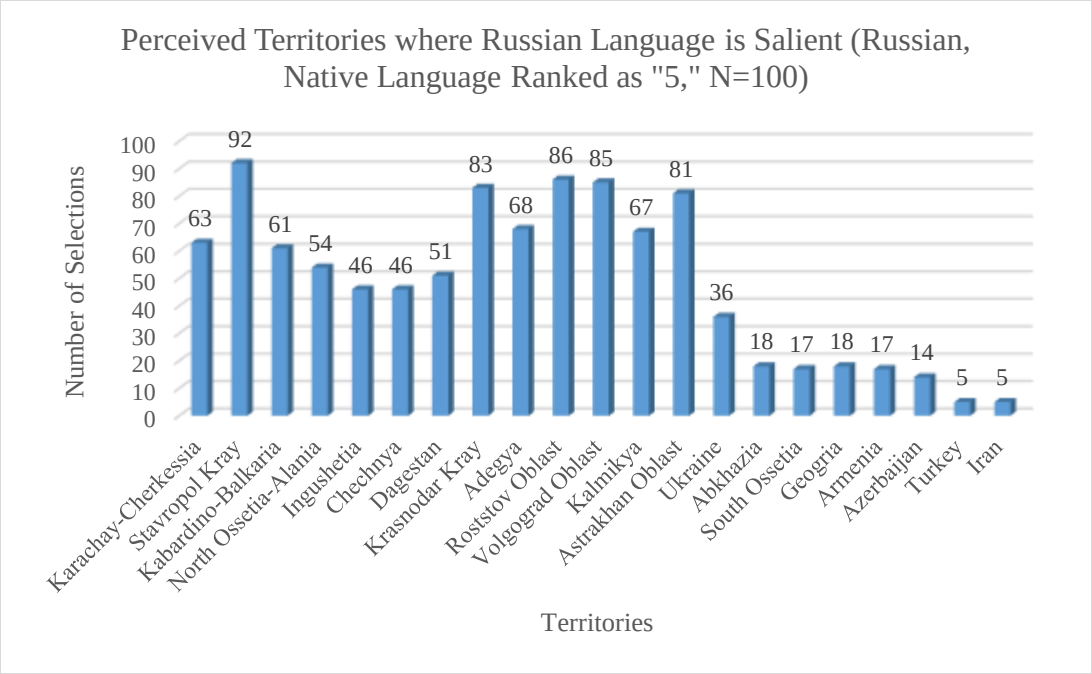

Figure 6.24 – Perceived Territories where Russian Language is Salient (Russian, Native Language Ranked as "5," N=100)

Figure 6.25 – Perceived Territories where Russian Language is Salient (Russian, Native Language Ranked as "1," N=33)

While both groups favored *kray*s and *oblast*s over republics, and territories outside the Russian Federation when considering the salience of Russian language, there was one interesting

difference between their responses. Two republics included in the study area are not part of the North Caucasus Federal District, Kalmykia and Adygea, which have non-Russian titular groups and non-Russian languages with official status. The ethnic Russian participants who claimed high importance for Russian language were much more likely not to select territory in Kalmykia and Adygea than those who claimed Russian language was of low importance. Participants who ranked "Native Language" as a "5" selected Adygea on 68 percent of their Map 1 responses, while ethnic Russians who ranked "Native Language" as a "1" selected Adygea on 82 percent. The same trend was visible with Kalmykia, where the same participants with strong language preference selected Kalmykia as Russian language salient on 67 percent of their map one responses, compared to 82 percent by ethnic Russians who ranked "Native Language" as a "1." This trend demonstrates that ethnic Russians who hold Russian language in high importance were more conscious of its status, or the presumed proportions of Russian to non-Russian speakers in various areas. While both groups clearly recognized decreasing salience of Russian language in the North Caucasus Republics, compared to *Kray*s and *Oblast*s, more participants who held Russian in low importance were willing to indicate its salience in Adygea and Kalmykia, suggesting that these participants either were not aware of Kalmykia and Adygea's republic status, or that they simply considered these two republics to more Russian language salient than the North Caucasus Republics.

Part II: Map 2 – Perceived Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region

Because one of my major goals with this project was to explore the relationship between territorial understanding of the North Caucasus region and association with national, religious and placed-based identity markers among the study area's population, I utilized responses from

Map 2, which asked the participants to indicate the territorial extents of the North Caucasus region, for a series of comparisons. In all of the composite maps I produced, I was also interested in examining collective groups' responses in terms of whether or not the results showed cognitive group alignment with the state-approved formalized definition on the location and territorial composition of the North Caucasus region, vis-à-vis the North Caucasus Federal District.

The first comparative analysis I conducted for Part II was between perceived location of the North Caucasus region between Russians and non-Russians. I then repeated the analysis between composite maps from Christians and Muslims, accounting for the two major markers of social identity among participants, as indicated by survey data and interviews. Next, I compared responses among participant groups who strongly identified with the "Russian Federation," "North Caucasus Region," and "Federal District" with responses from participants who claimed low importance for these place-based identity markers. For each group, I tabulated its territorial selections to compare against another variable, again using a Chi-Square test to check for significant differences in the distributions of responses.

Table 6.3 – Variable Groups for Map 2

Independent Variable Groups	Dependent Variable
Russian (N=399)*	Perceived Territorial Extent of the North Caucasus Region
Non-Russian (N=89)	
Christian (N=399)*	
Islam (N=46)	
Russian Federation - High Importance (N=202)*	
Russian Federation - Low Importance (N=26)	
North Caucasus - High Importance (N=225)	

North Caucasus - Low Importance (N=46)	
Federal District - High Importance (N=203)	
Federal District - Low Importance (N=38)	

*N=100 Randomized for Composite Map Representation

Comparing Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region from Ethnic Russians versus non-Russians

When looking at responses regarding participants' understandings in regard to the territorial extents of the North Caucasus Region from ethnic Russians and non-Russians, the composite maps from the two groups appear to be remarkably similar. Both groups seem to prioritize territories in the formalized North Caucasus Federal District as part of the region, while putting less emphasis on territories outside. Selections of Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Azerbaijan, or any territories outside the Russian border appear to have been made much more infrequently than selections for NCFD territories in particular.

Figure 6.26 - Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – Russian (N=100, 99% transparency)

Figure 6.27 - Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – Non-Russian (N=89, 99% transparency)

Given the closeness in appearance of the composite maps, it is perhaps not surprising that viewing tabulated selections for ethnic Russians and non-Russians also presents similar results. When I conducted a Chi-Square test on the two distributions, the test showed a significance value of 0.45, indicating that the two distributions were indeed not significantly different statistically. Therefore, these results indicate a clear understanding and agreement on where the North Caucasus region is located, and of which territories it is comprised, between Russians and non-Russians.

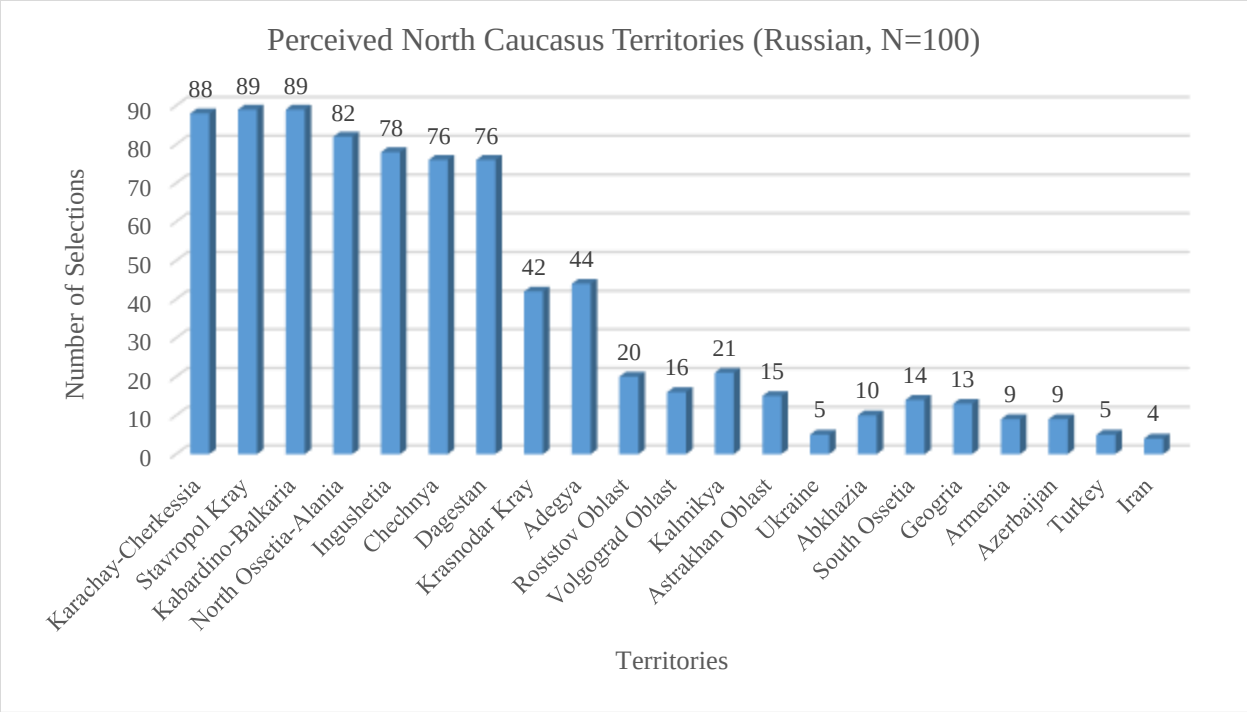

Figure 6.28 – Perceived North Caucasus Territories (Russian, N=100)

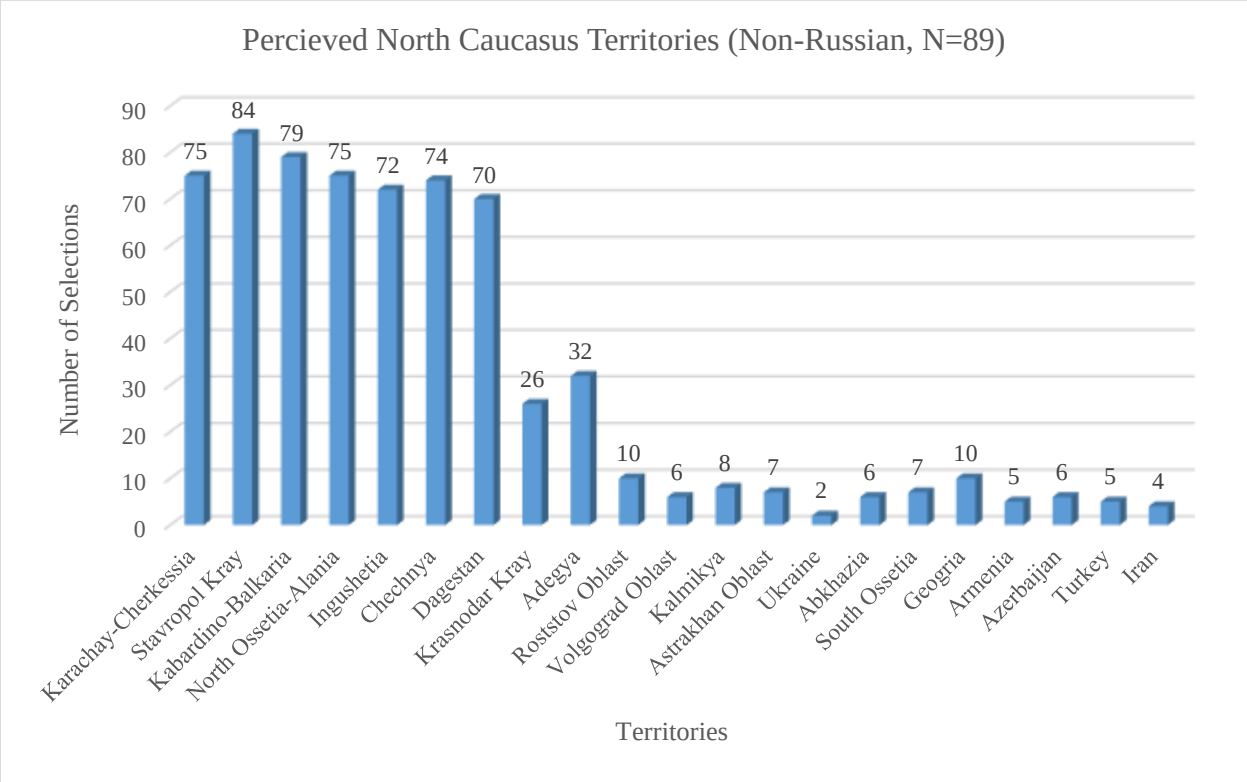

Figure 6.29 – Perceived North Caucasus Territories (Non-Russian, N=89)

Comparing Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region from Christians versus Muslims

Although the data trends did not show significantly different understandings regarding the location and assortment of territories that constitute the North Caucasus region when comparing responses from Russians and non-Russians, a comparison of responses based on religious affiliation showed a different result. When looking at the composite maps from each group, it is clear, as was the case with the ethnic Russian versus non-Russian comparison, that both groups respect the formalized borders of the North Caucasus Federal District. However, the composite map from Islamic participants shows a focused preference for the mountainous areas of the NCFD, close to the border with Georgia especially. The composite map from Christians fades slightly as it approaches the border, and less emphasis on territories outside of the Russian Federation. Southern Krasnodar *Kray*, Adygea and Kalmykia also appear slightly darker on the Islamic composite map than they appear on the Christian composite map.

Figure 6.30 - Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – Christian (N=100, 99% transparency)

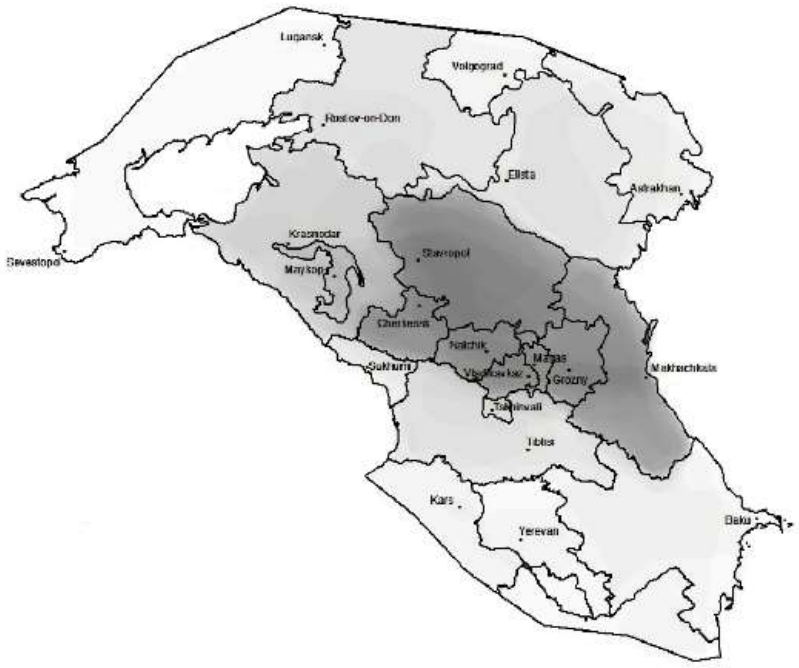

Figure 6.31 - Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – Islam (N=46, 98% transparency)

When I conducted a Chi-Square test on the distribution of selections from Muslim and Christian participants, the significance value was 0.01, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference between Muslims and Christians in terms of how these two groups view the location and territorial composition of the North Caucasus region. When comparing tabulated selections from Islamic and Christian participants, a notable difference comes to light immediately. While the republics in the eastern part of the region are selected as part of the North Caucasus progressively less by Christians, their number of selections remains consistent among on the Islamic composite map.

In general Muslims showed a more cohesive collective understanding of the region, as represented by the North Caucasus Federal District. All of the NCFD territories were selected by at least 89 percent of Islamic participants, while Christians only selected several of the republics with percentages in the seventies. Muslims were also more likely than Christians to make selections outside of the NCFD, especially for Krasnodar *Kray* and Adygea. Muslims selected

Krasnodar *Kray* on 39 percent of their maps to Christians' 23 percent. Muslims selected Adygea on 43 percent of their maps to Christians' 21 percent.

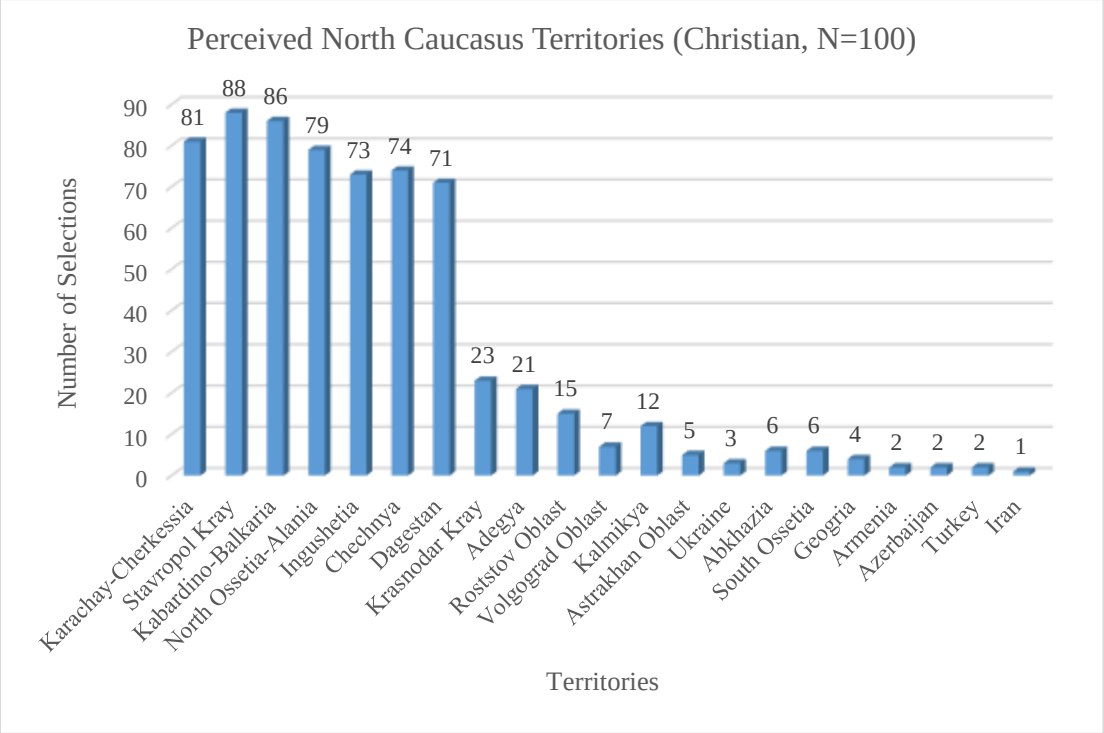

Figure 6.32 – Perceived North Caucasus Territories (Christian, N=100)

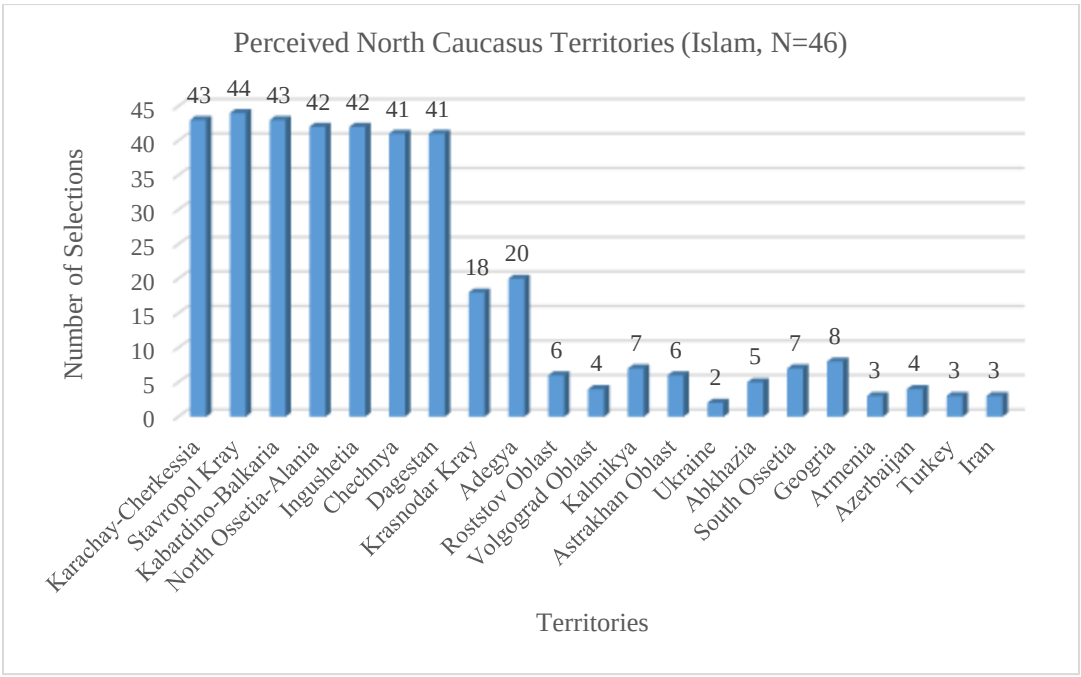

Figure 6.33 – Perceived North Caucasus Territories (Islam, N=46)

Comparing Perceived Territorial Extents and Territorial Composition of the North Caucasus Region from Participants with a High Preference for the "Russian Federation," versus Low Preference for the "Russian Federation"

To explore a possible relationship between participants' associations with the "Russian Federation" and their views on the North Caucasus region, I compared Map 2 response data from participants who had ranked "Russian Federation" as a "5" on the survey, versus participants who had ranked it as a "1." I wanted to examine the possibility that a strong identification with Russian might be correlated with his or her propensity to accept the state-backed formalized NCFD version of the North Caucasus, when compared to participants who did not strongly identify with the "Russian Federation," in terms of their personal views on identity.

While there were a few slight differences in the Map 2 responses from participants who ranked "Russian Federation" as a "5" versus a "1," the two resulting composite maps look remarkably similar. NCFD territories are clearly selected over other areas on both maps. One slight difference appears to be a heavier concentration of selections for the mountainous areas in NCFD republics by participants who ranked "Russian Federation" as a "1," whereas those participants who ranked "Russian Federation" as a "5" tended to draw their selection lines to include more areas, following formal borders.

Perhaps the most striking difference appears in the areas south of the Russian border. It appears that Participants who ranked "Russian Federation" as a "5" were more likely to select the traditional South Caucasus territories, as well as the disputed territories in Georgia than participants who ranked "Russian Federation" as a "1." These selections also tended to follow border lines, as was the trend with territories selected as part of the North Caucasus within the Russian border.

Figure 6.34 – Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – RF 5 (N=100, 99% transparency)

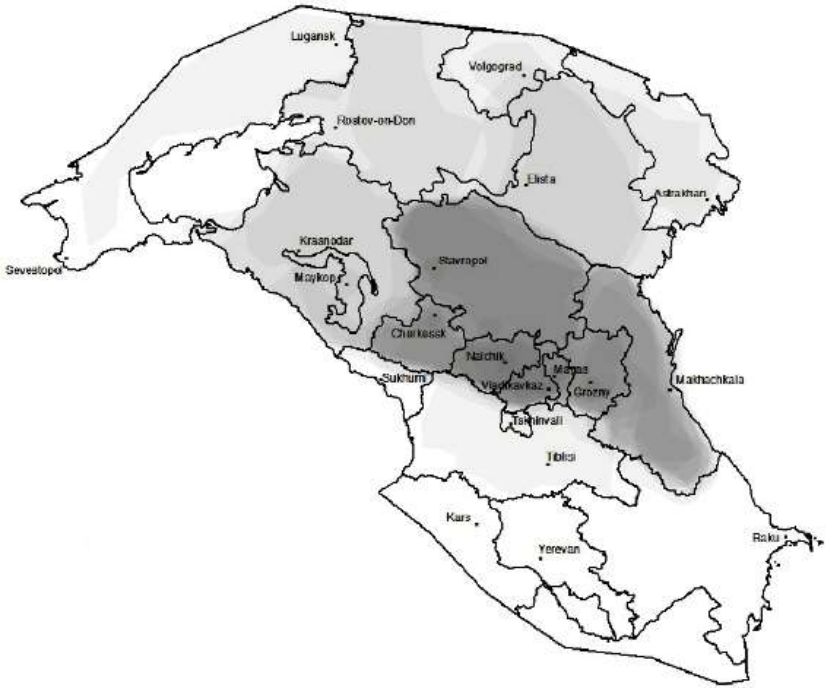

Figure 6.35 – Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – RF 1 (N=26, 95% transparency)

As was the case with their composite maps, the tabulated selections of territories based on ranked affiliations with the "Russian Federation," appeared to have very similar distributions when comparing participant who had ranked "Russian Federation" as a "5" versus a "1." Indeed, the Chi-Square test registered a significance value 0.17, indicating that there was no significant difference in regard to the specific territories selected as part of the "North Caucasus Region" between these two groups. Therefore, based on these data trends, there does not appear to be any major difference in how participants understood the territorial extents and composition of the North Caucasus region based on how strongly they regarded the "Russian Federation" as a marker of identity.

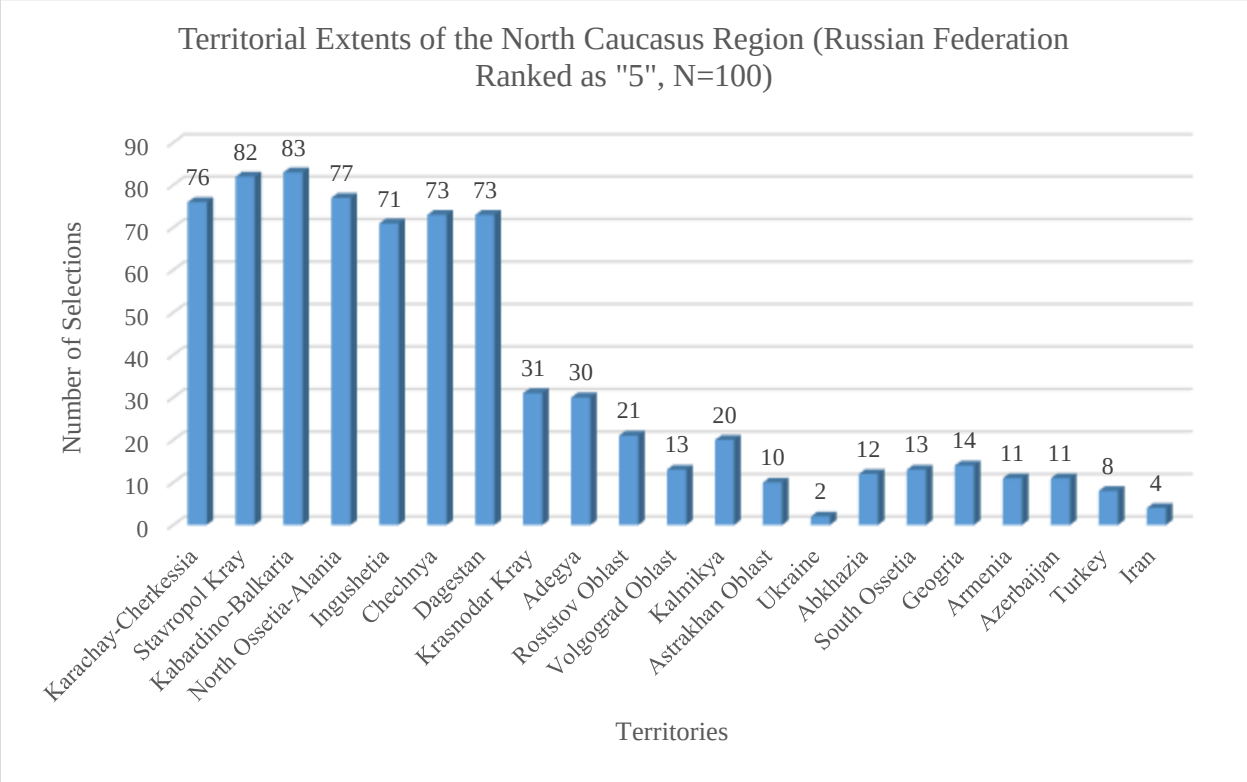

Figure 6.36 – Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region (Russian Federation Ranked as "5," N=100)

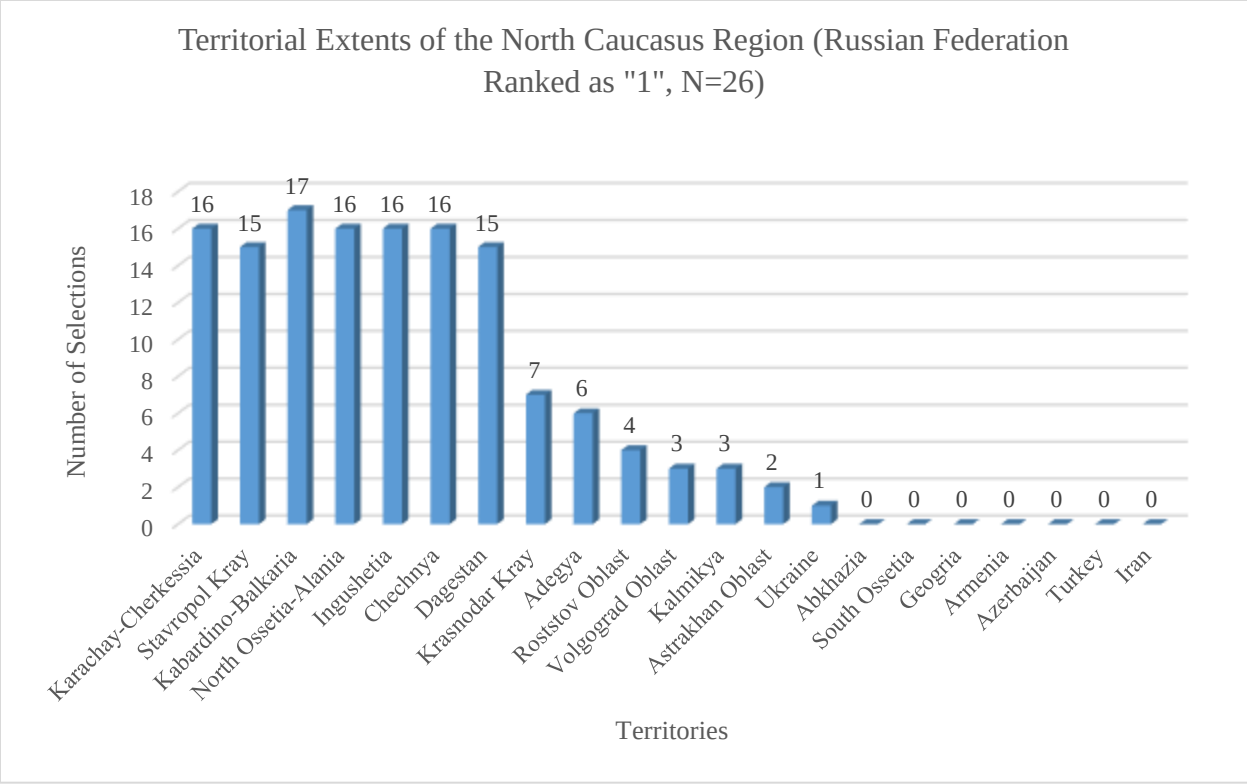

Figure 6.37 – Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region (Russian Federation Ranked as "1", N=26)

Comparing Perceived Territorial Extents and Territorial Composition of the North Caucasus Region from Participants with a High Preference for the "North Caucasus," versus Low Preference for the "North Caucasus"

The next comparison in conducted for Map 2 response data dealt with participants' spatial understanding the "North Caucasus," based on their associations with the region as a vernacular place-based identity construct. As I had done with to compare collective group opinion in association with "Russian Federation," I compared Map 2 response data from participants who had ranked "North Caucasus" as a "5" on the survey, versus participants who had ranked it as a "1." Again, I wanted to examine the possibility that a strong identification with a place-based identity marker, this time the "North Caucasus," might be correlated with a participant's propensity to indicate an understanding of the region that matched a the NCFD borders. In this case, I expected participants who strongly associated with the region to go

outside of the NCFD borders, and those who did not strongly associate with the "North Caucasus" to rely on the NCFD definition as a default.

Composite maps based on this place-based identity marker, comparing responses based on personal identity, produced very similar composite maps. Territories in the NCFD are definitely more popular in each case than territories outside. Participants who ranked the "North Caucasus" as a "5" were more willing to go outside of the NDCF borders than participants who had ranked the region as a "1," but this difference appeared to be very minimal. Perhaps the best example of this slight difference can be seen with selections of Adygea, which appears to be slightly darker on the composite map of participants who ranked the "North Caucasus" as a "5."

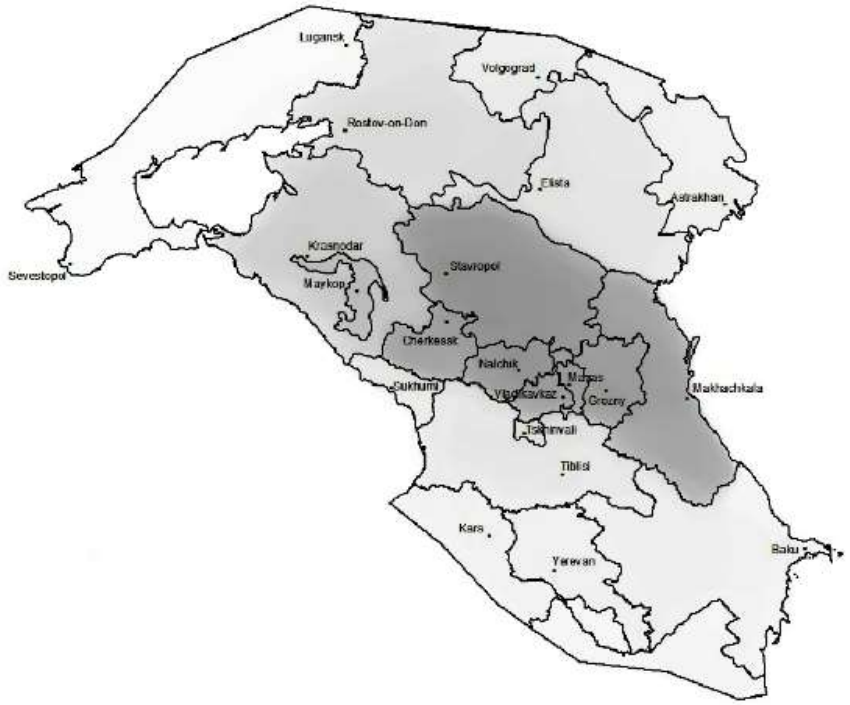

Figure 6.38 – Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – NC 5 (N=100, 99% transparency)

Figure 6.39 – Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – NC 1 (N=42, 98% transparency)

When looking at tabulated selections of the induvial territories by participants who ranked the North Caucasus as a "5" versus as a "1," the distributions appear to be very similar. When I conducted a Chi-Square analysis on these data, the test registered a significance value of 0.99, indicating that the slight differences in these two distributions were indeed not significantly different.

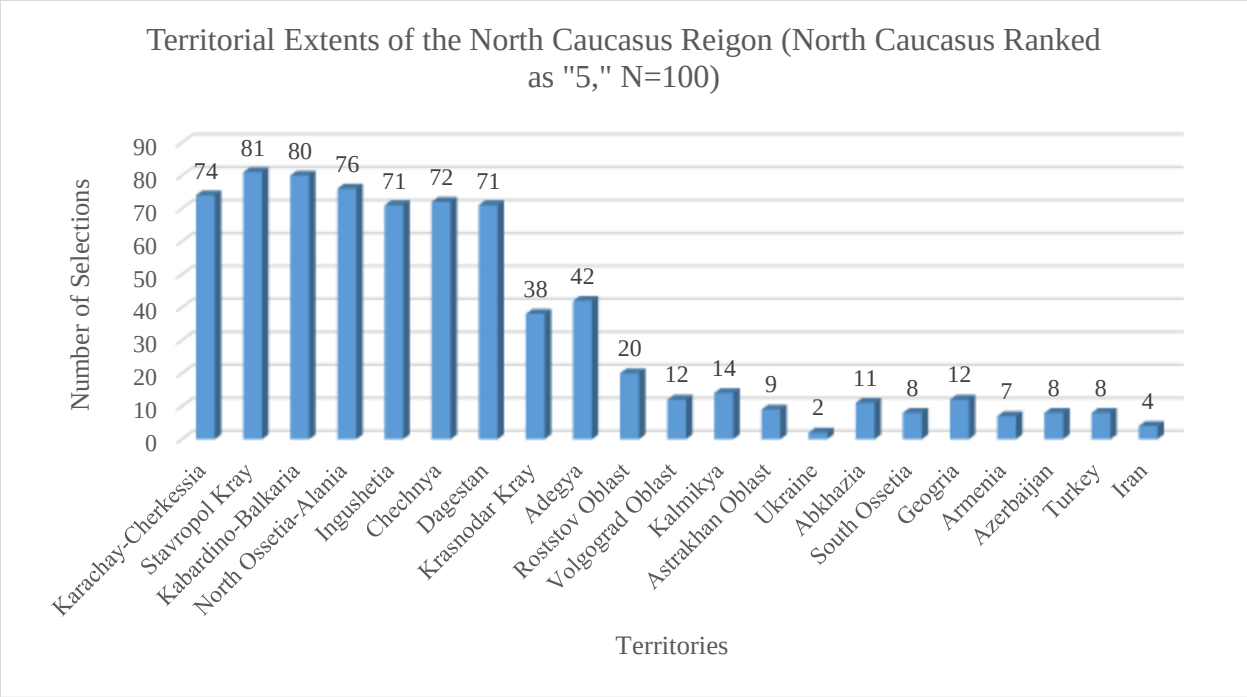

Figure 6.40 – Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region (North Caucasus Ranked as “5,” N=100

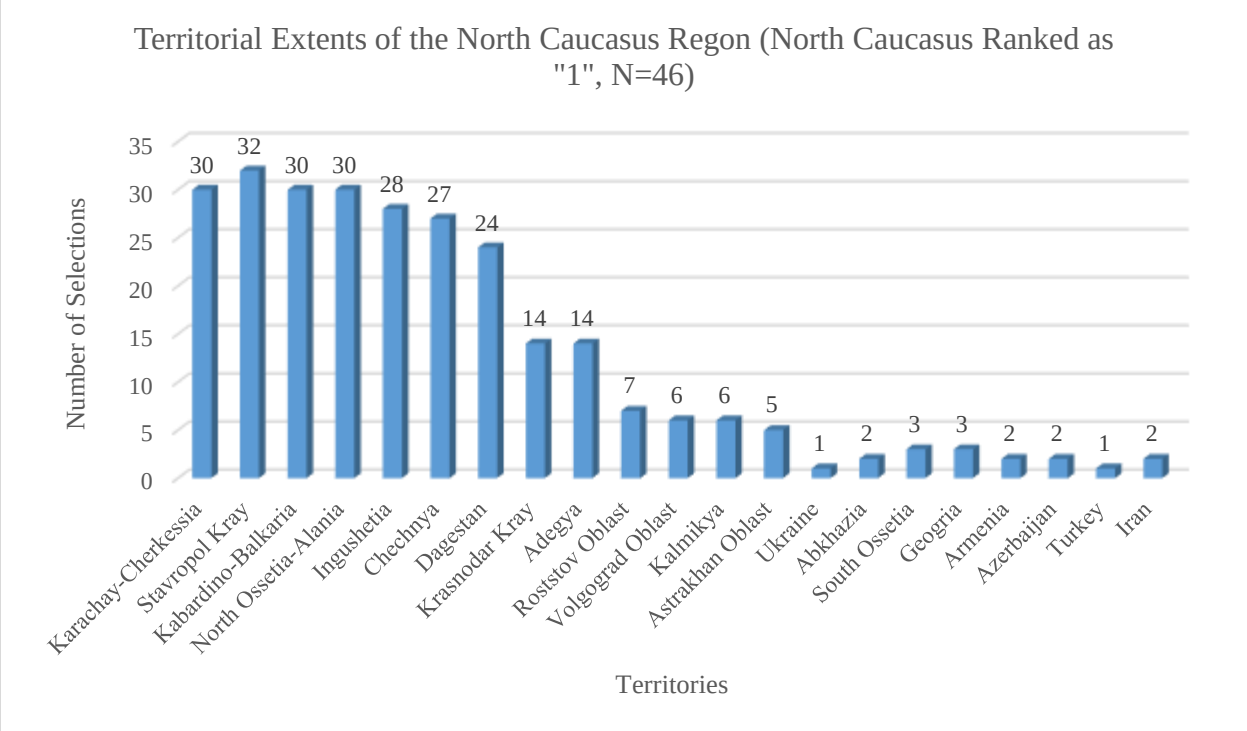

Figure 6.41 – Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region (North Caucasus Ranked as "1", N=46)

Comparing Perceived Territorial Extents and Territorial Composition of the North Caucasus Region from Participants with a High Preference for the "Federal District" versus Low Preference for the "Federal District"

When comparing Map 2 composite responses from participants who strongly identified with the "Federal District" as an identity marker (ranking "Federal District" a "5" on their surveys) with participants who ranked it as having low importance (ranking "Federal District" as a "1"), the two groups tended to be in agreement regarding their territorial selections. There are however, two trends that should be noted from these composite maps. First, Stavropol *Kray* appears to be more prominently selected in map produced by responses from participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "5," compared to the map of those who ranked it as a "1." Additionally the map from participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "1" shows higher concentrations of selections for territories in in Southern Stavropol *Kray,* closer to the Caucasus Mountains, than does the map from participants who ranked "Federal District" with a "5." Therefore the visual map results show that participants with strong identification to the "Federal District" were more comfortable including Stavropol *Kray*, in its entirety, into their perceived territorial understandings of the "North Caucasus," than participants who ranked "Federal District" with low importance.

Another interesting trend when comparing these two Map 2 composites can be observed when looking at Krasnodar *Kray*. The composite map from participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "5" clearly shows more collective emphasis within Krasnodar *Kray* when compared to the composite from participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "1." I found this trend to be surprising, as Krasnodar *Kray* was not included into the North Caucasus Federal District when the territory was formally established in 2010. This trend suggests that participants who strongly identify with the NCFD might feel that it is an important marker of

identity conceptually, and not be aware of its actually defined boundaries and composition, or they might feel as though the Federal District definition of the region does not include all of the territories that these participants considered as part of the North Caucasus in the vernacular sense. Nonetheless, it appears that participants who ranked the Federal District of low importance produced a composite that matched formalized federal district definition of the region more closely than participants who strongly identified with the concept of "Federal District" as an identity marker.

Figure 6.42 – Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – FD 5 (N=100, 99% transparency)

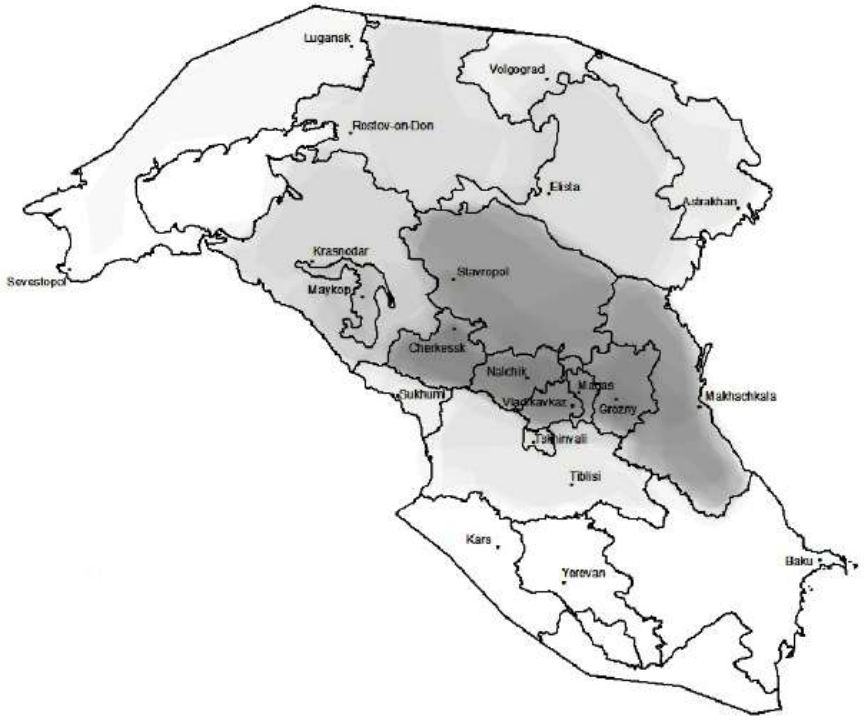

Figure 6.43 – Map 2: Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region – FD 1 (N=31, 97% transparency)

Tabulating the territorial selections for comparison and Chi-Square analysis yielded results that matched the visual observations that I was able to draw from composite maps. The patterns in territorial selection of participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "5" and those who ranked "Federal District" as a "1" differed mainly in the proportions of selections for Stavropol *Kray* and Krasnodar *Kray*. Portions of Stavropol *Kray* were selected in 85 percent of the maps from participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "5," versus on 68 percent of the maps from participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "1." Selections for Krasnodar *Kray* appeared on 36 percent of the maps from participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "5," versus on 24 percent of the maps of participants who had ranked "Federal District" as a "1."

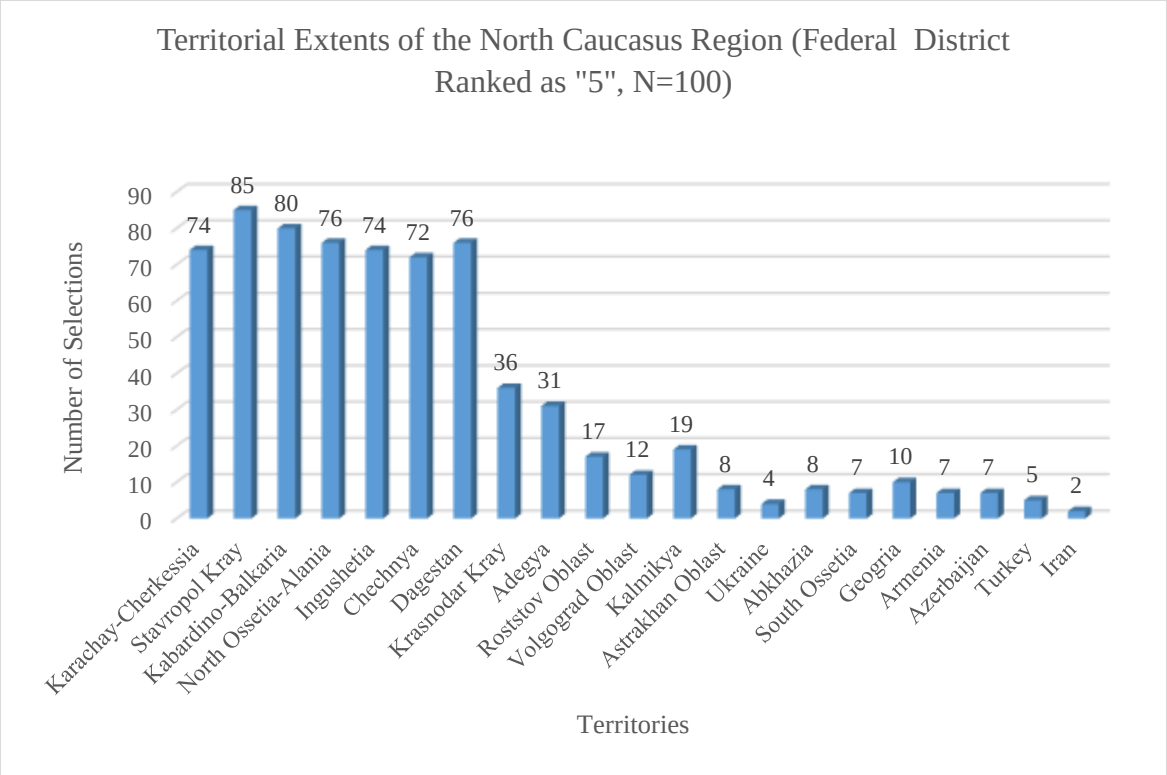

Figure 6.44 – Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region (Federal District Ranked as "5," N=100)

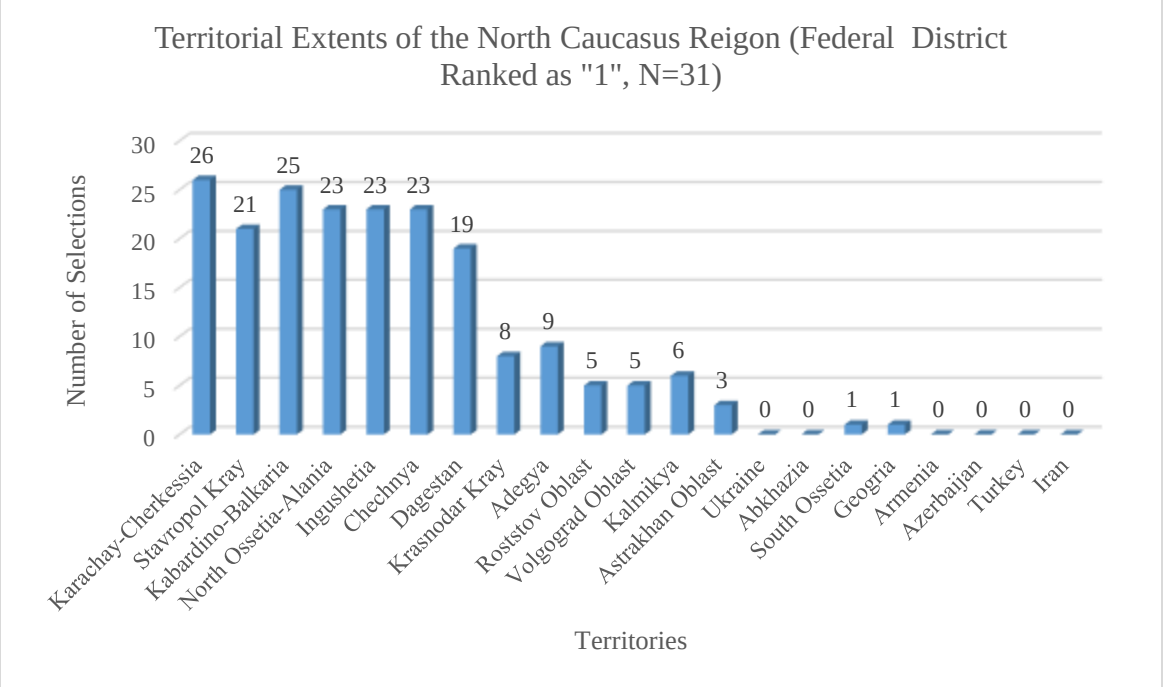

Figure 6.45 – Territorial Extents of the North Caucasus Region (Federal District Ranked as "1", N=31)

When I conducted a Chi-Square test for these distributions, the analysis returned a significance value of 0.00, suggesting that there is a statistically significant difference between selections of participants who strongly identified with "Federal District" as an identity marker versus, those who did not. Interview data from participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "1" did seem to suggest some hesitation by such participants to fully incorporate Stavropol into the North Caucasus. Once example from Participant V006, an 18-year old man from Stavropol, who ranked "North Caucasus" as a "1" offered the following statement:

> Actually, Stavropol's role in the North Caucasus is fairly interesting because it just recently became part of the North Caucasus in an official sense. Stavropol is a very diverse territory. I think that it has cities that really do look like the traditional North Caucasus ideal, like Kislovodsk and Pyatigorsk for example. However, there are also some pretty traditional Russian villages in central and northern parts of Stavropol *Kray*. There people are not living much differently than populations in other ethnic Russian villages anywhere else in Russia. There are a lot more non-Russian people moving into Stavropol though, especially since it became part of the North Caucasus Federal District. I think soon we will be about 50 percent Russian and 50 percent non-Russian.

This assessment by participant V006 supports the visual trend for participants not strongly associating with "Federal District" as an identity marker to select areas of Southern Stavropol *Kray*, while omitting its northern and central areas.

The idea that a break exists between Slavic/Russian culture and non-Russian culture somewhere in Stavropol *Kray*, also suggested by Participant V006, was echoed by several other participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "1," and were not willing to define the entire *Kray* as the "North Caucasus," per Map 2. The theme of Russian versus non-Russian identity for Stavropol *Kray* was also broached by Participant V039, a 24-year old Russian man from Stavropol, who ranked "Federal District" as a "1." According to Participant V039:

> I do not strongly identify with the idea of a federal district, or even with the North Caucasus because I think these territories are political and they are devices that are

> used to promote one agenda or another. To me, it seems that we are supposed to understand Stavropol as the same as the North Caucasus, according to the latest division of territory (the North Caucasus Federal District). I find this idea ridiculous because Stavropol is nothing like the republics. We have a different mentality here, along with a different culture and different religion. We should be in the Southern Federal District, not the North Caucasus Federal District.

These thoughts from Participant V039 exhibit evidence of disconnect between his understandings of the North Caucasus in terms of "identity of a region" versus "regional consciousness," as suggested by Paasi (2003). The participant clearly disagrees with his territory's formalized inclusion into the NCFD versus the Southern Federal District, based on two important elements that Passi (2003) associates with the "identity of a region:" culture and religion. Participant V039's sense of "regional consciousness" does not align with the state-formalized "identity of a region," and thus the participant's comments reflect a conflict in terms of his conception of regional identity.

The insights of Participants V039 and V006 on Stavropol's place in the North Caucasus, namely that Stavropol does not entirely fit in with the other territories in the NCFD, may also explain why Krasnodar *Kray* was also more often omitted as part of the North Caucasus by participants who ranked "Federal District" as a "1." Krasnodar *Kray*, like Stavropol, is comprised of a Slavic (ethnic Russian) majority. It is also heavily agrarian and its terrain transitions from Steppe to mountainous areas in the South, just as Stavropol *Kray*'s transitions. Therefore, there are several logical reasons one might consider Stavropol and Krasnodar *Kray*s to be similar. It is clear from his comments that Participant V039 disagrees with the formalization of Stavropol *Kray* as part of the North Caucasus, and the trends in the map and selection data would suggest that his opinions are shared to a significant degree among others who do not strongly associate with "Federal District" as an identity marker.

Despite the fact that some participants clearly went against the borders of the NCFD when indicating the location and composition of what they believed to be the territorial extents of the North Caucasus, it is important to note that on every composite map in Part II, the NCFD appears highlighted, and its territories are more commonly selected than outside territories. This very clear trend suggests that participants were using this state-formalized definition to decide which territories to indicate, suggesting agreement between state-produced definitions and overall regional consciousness.

Evidence of collective agreement between the NCFD and the "North Caucasus" is likely the result of the successful dissemination of state-produced knowledge on the local population, which has allowed the Russian state to exercise territoriality by presenting its formalized definition of the region as "reality-as-it-is" (Hakli, 2001). The NCFD territorial definition is strictly state driven, as referencing the specific territories of which it is comprised together as the "North Caucasus" is perhaps illogical, as suggested by several participants. For example, using a definition based on the mountains or congruent physical landscapes would certainly prompt more participants to include Krasnodar *Kray*, and conceptions of the region based on non-Russian populations would have promoted more emphasis on Adygea and Kalmykia. As theory would suggest, the trend for participants to select the NDFC definition may be to their experience with "visualizing devices," images (maps) produced by the state, which work to create optical consistency (Latour, 1986) thus reifying the state's definition as a marker of territorial identity.

Part III – Map 3: Salience of Religion

Along with ethno-national identity, religious identity is a very prominent social factor in how people in the North Caucasus form group associations and personal conceptions of identity.

Just as looking at perceived areas for native language and national traditions, asking participants to indicate areas where their religious beliefs were salient on Map 3 provided insight into the territorial understandings of the study area Christian and Muslim communities. The North Caucasus, in addition to being a transition zone between Russian and non-Russian space, can also be considered as a transition zone between the greater Christian- dominant and Muslim-dominant regions of the world. Therefore, viewing composite maps from Christians and Muslims provided me with an interesting glimpse into general understandings and perceptions of religious salience in the study area.

The general expectations I had for the overall composite map patterns were based on majority ethno-national populations in each territory of the study area, per census data, and those groups' traditional religious associations. Therefore, I expected areas in which the majority of the population is of an ethno-national group associated with Christianity to identify said territory as salient for Christianity. For example, I expected Stavropol *Kray*, Krasnodar *Kray*, Rostov *Oblast*, and the other predominantly ethnic Russian areas to indicate salience for Christianity, along with Armenia, Georgia, North-Ossetia and South-Ossetia, which are also predominantly Christian. I expected the North Caucasus Republics, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran and Abkhazia to be selected more by Muslim participants.

It was important to compare responses from those participants who identified strongly with their religion, ranking it a "5" on survey data, with those who did not strongly identify with their religion, ranking it a "1." I expected there to be some polarization between Christians who were heavily invested in their religion versus those who were not in terms of where they understood their beliefs to be salient. I expected the same to be true in terms of Muslims who

saw their religion as very important to their personal senses of identity, versus those who did not strongly identify with Islam.

Table 6.4 – Variable Groups for Map 3

Independent Variable Groups	Dependent Variable
Christian (N=399)*	Religion
Christian – Religion Important (N=59)	
Christian – Religion Not Important (N=59)	
Islam (N=46)	
Islam – Practicing (N=19)	
Islam – Not Practicing (N=19)	

*N=100 Randomized for Composite Map Representation

The Map 3 composites for Christians and Muslims followed my expectations very closely. In the Christian composite map, the most commonly selected areas are the *Kray*s and *Oblast*s, followed by Ukraine, Kalmykia, Armenia, the North Caucasus Republics and Adygea, Georgia, and finally the other countries outside of the Russian Federation. Interestingly, Christian participants overlooked Georgia more than I had expected, and they also did not indicate North or South Ossetia in high concentration. There are perhaps two logical explanations for these omissions. First, the majority of Christian participants many not have understood that the aforementioned areas are majority Christian. For example, since North-Ossetia is often associated with the other non-Russian republics in political discourse, some participants many not have been aware that Ossetians are majority Christian, despite being surrounded by majority Muslim populations.

Another reason could be that different Christian branches and denominations were understood as different religions. For example, since there are differences between the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the Russian Orthodox Church, followers of either many not

have selected territories heavily associated with the other Church. This explanation would account for why Armenia was more heavily selected than Georgia, as there were more Armenians than Georgians in the participant pool. This explanation was evident in interview data, as seen in the comments of Participant V022, a 26-year old Christian woman from Stavropol. According to Participant V022:

> Armenians are also Christians, but there are some differences. I would consider this map to be my religion, which is Russian Orthodox Christianity. Georgia is also different, so I did not include Georgia either.

These comments illustrate the complexities of how breaks in religious identity can have an impact on perceived territorial salience. Nonetheless, it is important note that a clear break between the Stavropol and Krasnodar *Kray*s, and the North Caucasus republics is visible, suggesting that Christian participants indeed understood Christianity in the republics to be less salient than in the majority ethnic Russian territories.

Figure 6.46 – Map 3: Salience of Religion – Christians (N=100, 99% transparency)

Figure 6.47 – Map 3: Salience of Religion – Muslims (N=46, 98% transparency)

Viewing the Map 3 composite from Islamic participants, I noticed that it too met my expectations to a high degree. The most commonly selected areas were in the North Caucasus Republics. Of the traditionally ethnic Russian territories, Stavropol was the most commonly selected. Adygea also showed greater selection concentrations than Krasnodar *Kray*, which surrounds it. Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey are also much more heavily selected on Muslim participants' Map 3 composite than on Christian Participants' Map 3 composite. However, just as some Christian participants were hesitant to claim territory that they perceived to be salient to other branches of Christianity, interview data revealed that some Muslims were sensitive to the differences in perceived territorial salience between Sunni and Shia. For example, according to participant V028, a Muslim woman from Karachaevsk, Karachay-Chekessia:

> I do not consider the Islamic traditions in Azerbaijan to be consistent with a Nogay version of Islam, which is Sunni. Azeris are Shiites and they have a different way of practicing.

Comments and understanding like those of participant V028, who strongly identifies with Islam in terms of her own personal identity, illustrate how seriously of how religious understandings can be defined in the North Caucasus.

Regarding the case of North Ossetia, Muslim participants chose this territory less frequently than the other North Caucasus republics, and even less frequently than Stavropol *Kray*. This trend again suggests the importance of religious identity for social divisions in the North Caucasus. While Christian participants may have simply associated North Ossetia with a majority non-Russian area, and therefore also with Islam, Muslims participants were obviously aware of the majority Christian population in North Ossetia, as indicated by Muslim participants' Map 3 composite. This awareness can be seen in the comments of Participant V029, a 30-year old Muslim man from Stavropol, who offered:

> Vladikavkaz, in my opinion, is a very important city for understanding the North Caucasus. It really shows the religious diversity that the region had, even before ethnic Russians came in. Sometimes people tend to forget that Ossetians and some other small groups are Christians in and of themselves, not because they converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity.

It is also important to note that areas in Stavropol *Kray* were selected in higher concentrations than other majority ethnic Russian territories. This trend on the map definitely suggests that Muslim participants were comfortable including Stavropol *Kray* with other perceived salient Islamic territories, including the northern part of Stavropol *Kray*, which several participants in the study have notes specifically as having traditional Russian villages and agricultural ways of life that are not necessarily congruent with non-Russian communities in the southern portion of the North Caucasus Federal District. However, the borders of the North Caucasus Federal District appear to be clearly defined on Muslim participants' Map 3 composite, suggesting that the NCFD constitutes salient Islamic territory.

Comparing Perceived Territorial Salience of Christianity from Christian Participants with a High Preference for "Religion," versus Low Preference for the "Religion"

When comparing responses from Christians who strongly favored "Religion" in terms of their personal sense of identity, thus ranking "Religion" a "5" on their surveys, with responses from Christians who ranked "Religion" as a "1," I found some striking differences in how these two groups understood territorial salience of Christianity. The territories that were selected in highest concentrations for rationally majority Christian populations, the majority ethnic Russian *Kray*s and Republics, along with Ukraine, were selected by both groups. However, there seems to be some disagreement in regard to the salience of Christianity in the North Caucasus Republics and Kalmykia, as Christians who ranked "Religion" with a "5" were much less likely to claim the Republics as salient for Christianity.

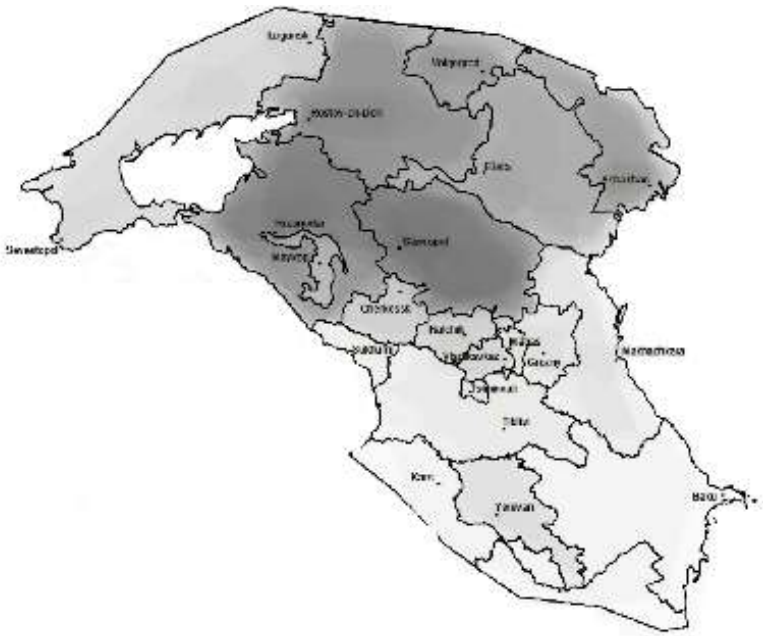

Figure 6.48 – Map 3: Salience of Religion –Christians Religion Very Important (N=59, 98% transparency)

Figure 6.49 – Map 3: Salience of Religion –Christians Religion Not Important (N=59, 98% transparency)

I found that the trend for Christians who strongly associated with "Religion" to avoid the North Caucasus Republics on their Map 3 responses was verified after I tabulated the individual territorial selections and performed a Chi-Square test on the distributions of the two groups. Christians who had ranked "Religion" as a "5" selected Karachay-Cherkessia on 32 percent of their maps, Kabardino-Balkaria on 24 percent, North Ossetia-Alania on 25 percent, Ingushetia on 22 percent, Chechnya on 20 percent, and Dagestan on 22 percent. Christians who had ranked "Religion" as a "1" selected these territories at frequencies of 53 percent, 47 percent, 44 percent, 36 percent, 36 percent, and 32 percent respectively. Performing a Chi-Square test on these distributions resulted in a significant value of 0.00, indicating that the selection patterns of Christians who ranked "Religion" as a "5"were significantly different than the pattern from those Christian participants who had ranked "Religion" as a "1."

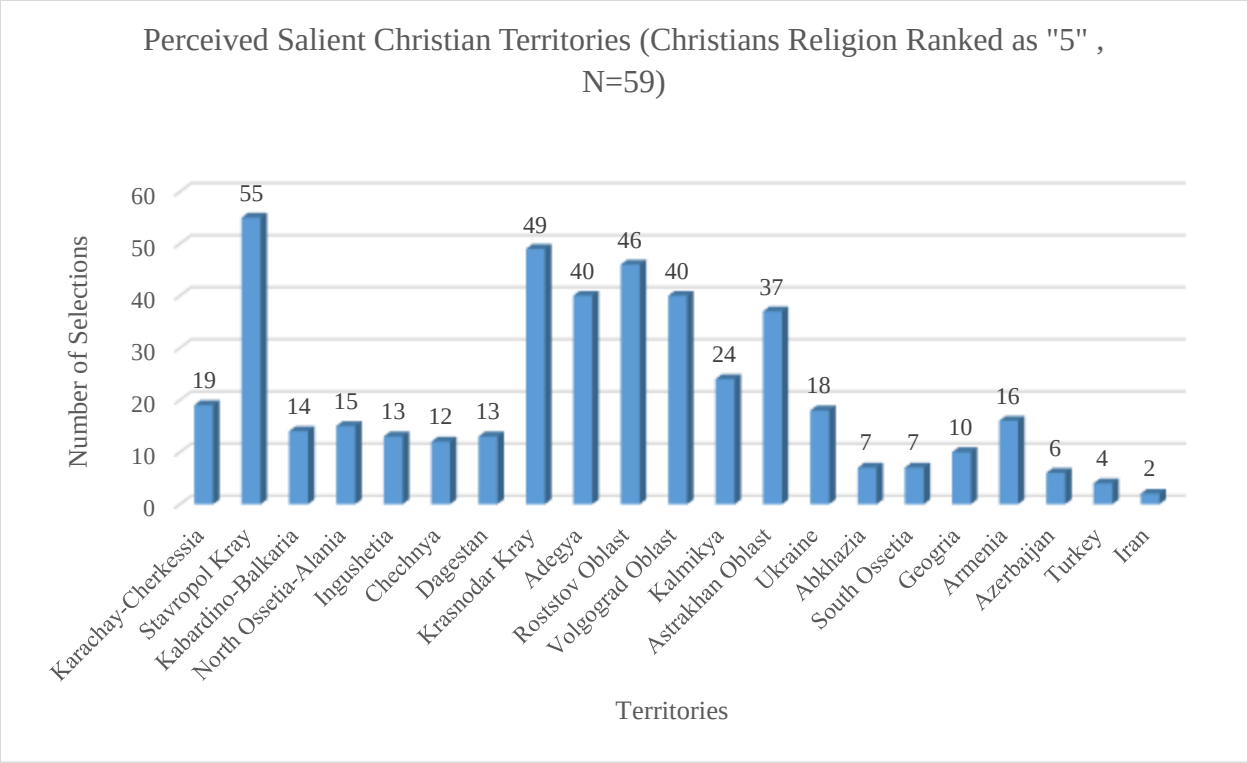

Figure 6.50 – Perceived Salient Christian Territories (Christians Religion Ranked as "5," N=59)

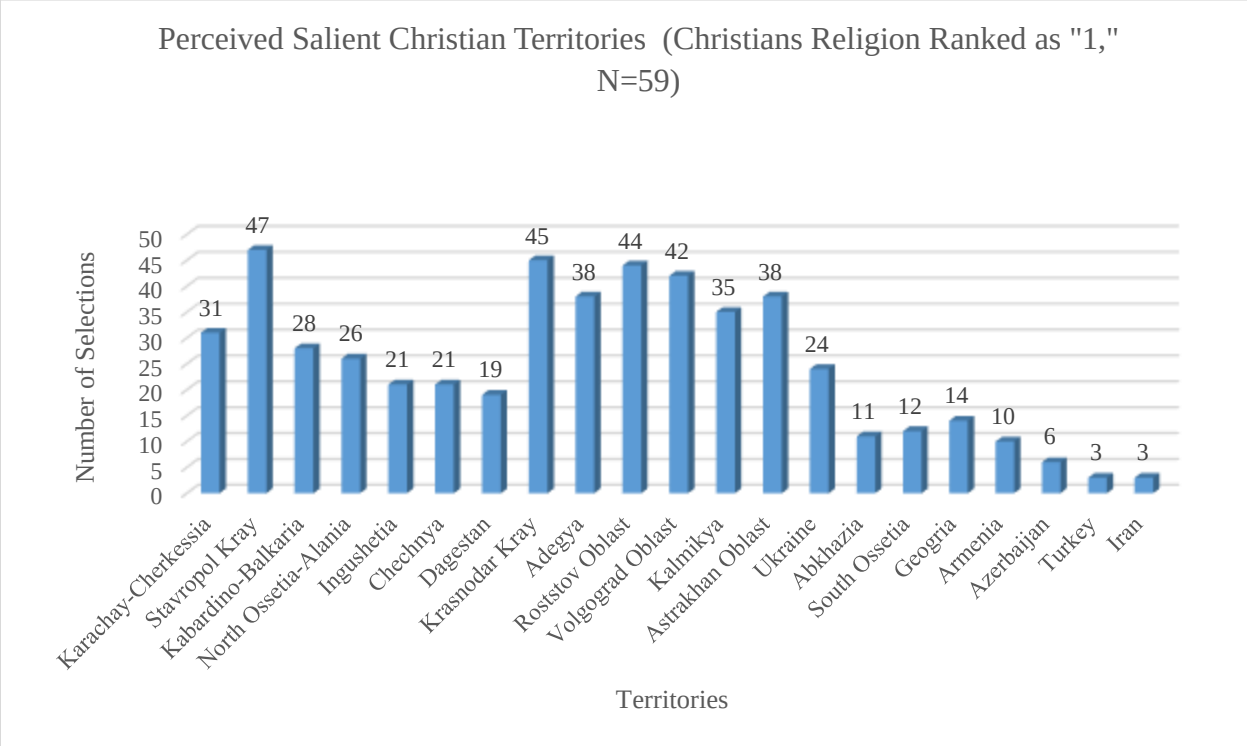

Figure 6.51 – Perceived Salient Christian Territories (Christians Religion Ranked as "1," N=59)

There was evidence in the interview data that shed light on the significant trend of Christians who ranked religion as a "5" not to indicate the North Caucasus territories as salient Christian territories. The most common trend I discovered in my conversations with participants on the presence of Christian communities in the study area tended to focus on out-migration of Russians/Christians from the Republics, and also from the North Caucasus region in general. Participant V039 offered the following comments on the topic:

> I think Orthodox Christianity is getting less and less common in the North Caucasus republics. Although, I know that before the conflict with Chechnya, there were a lot Christians there, but they got out either during or after the conflict.

Participant V039's comment speaks to the fact that he, and presumably other Christians based on the data, are aware of the out-migration trend in question. Both this kind of awareness, and collective acknowledgment of the lack of Christian salient areas that can be seen in the data, suggest that seeing "Religion" as important does constitute a potential polarization regarding perceived Christian territories in the North Caucasus. These differences also support the greater idea that religious identity constitutes and extremely important factor of identity in the region, and there are significant territorial differences in how the salience of religion is understood.

Comparing Perceived Territorial Salience of Islam from Muslim Participants actively practicing Islam versus those not Practicing

When I conducted the same analysis on the perceptions of Islamic salience between groups of Muslim participants, I found very similar trends to those demonstrated by the responses of Christian participants. While ideally I would have looked at Muslims who ranked "Religion" as a"5" versus a "1," very few Muslim participants ranked "Religion" as a "1." Therefore, in order to take a potentially more meaningful statistical approach, I decided to run

the analysis on groups based on practice, as participants indicated whether not they activity practiced their religion on the survey.

The results indicated some differences in perceived salience between practicing versus non-practicing Muslim participants. First, areas in the North Caucasus Republics were selected for Islamic salience more frequently than *Kray*s and *Oblast*s, or territories outside the Russian Federation by both groups. However, concentrations specifically in the republics and mountainous areas of Stavropol *Kray* were selected in a more specific manor by practicing Muslims than by non-practicing Muslim participants. Similar to the pattern I observed with Christian association, the tendency of Muslim participants who claimed to actively practice was to omit traditional majority Christian territories on their maps more frequently than Muslims participants who claimed not to practice.

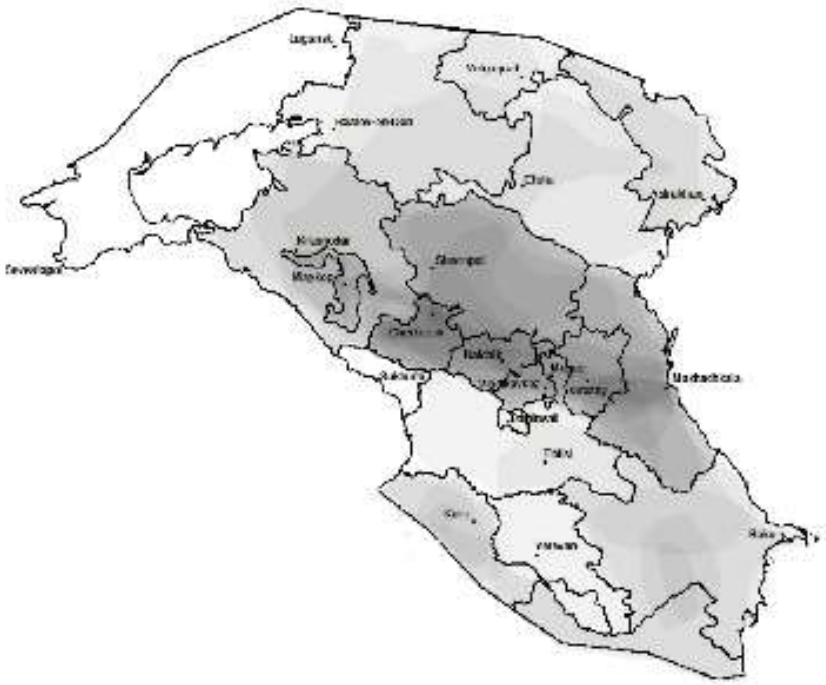

Figure 6.52 – Map 3: Salience of Religion – Practicing Muslims (N=19, 95% transparency)

Figure 6.53 – Map 3: Salience of Religion – Non-Practicing Muslims (N=27, 96% transparency)

I conducted a Chi-Square test on the territorial selection distributions from practicing and non-practicing Muslim participants, and again the differences were significant, with the test results showing a Chi-Square significance value again of 0.00. When looking at territorial selections, I observed that the selection pattern for Islamic territorial salience was indeed similar between practicing and non-practicing Muslim participants, concerning the selections made for the North Caucasus republics. However, non-practicing Muslims were much more likely to associate Islamic salience with territories outside of the North Caucasus Federal District than practicing Muslims. Non-practicing Muslim participants selected Rostov *Oblast* on 25 percent of their Map 3 responses, Volgograd *Oblast* on 22 percent and Astrakhan *Oblast* on 22 percent. Practicing Muslims selected these territories at frequencies of 16 percent, 16 percent and 21 percent respectively.

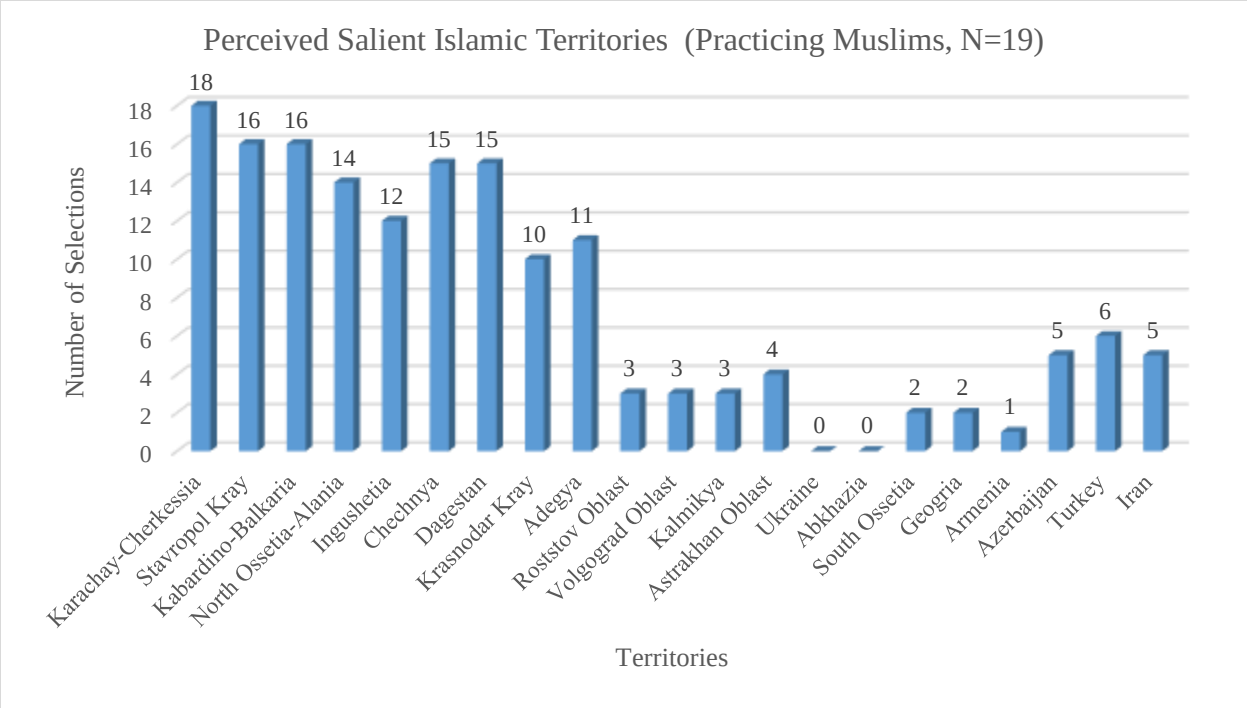

Figure 6.54 – Perceived Salient Islamic Territories (Practicing Muslims, N=19)

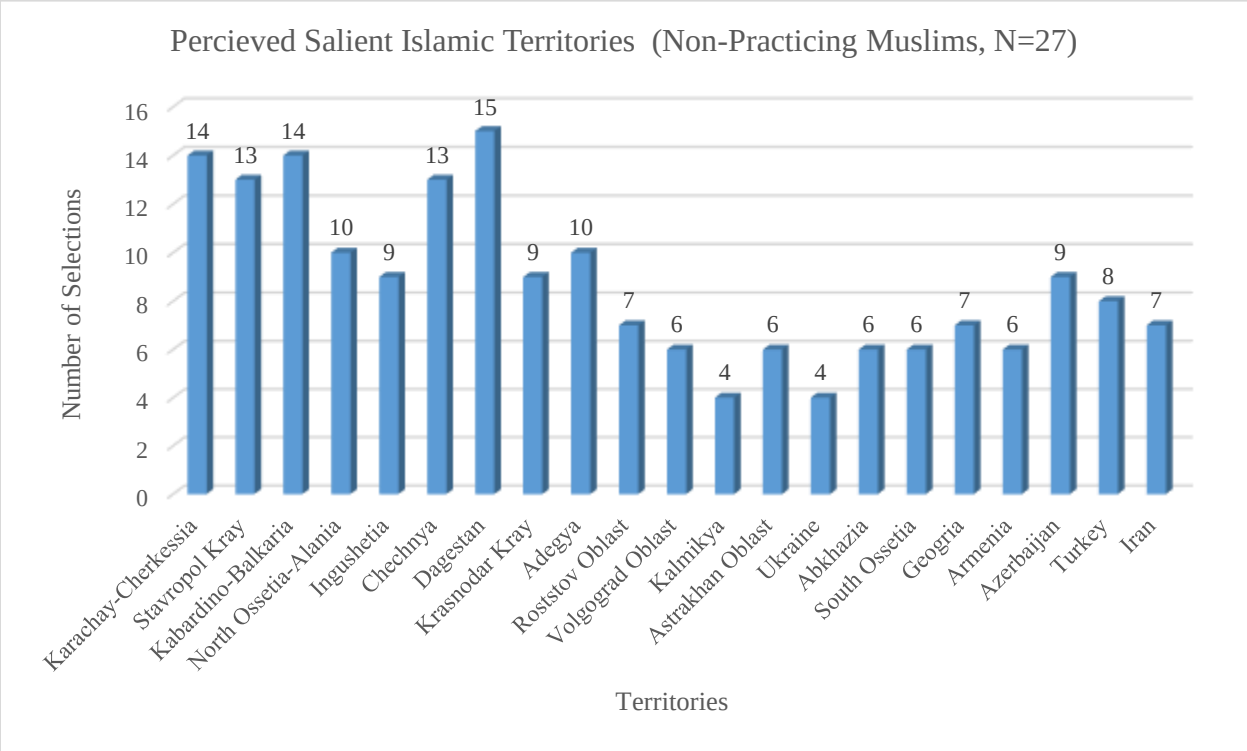

Figure 6.55 – Perceived Salient Islamic Territories (Non-Practicing Muslims, N=27)

Another interesting difference I noticed was that practicing Muslims were more likely to select Stavropol *Kray* and Krasnodar *Kray* for Islamic salience than were non-practicing Muslims. Areas in Stavropol *Kray* were selected on 84 percent of the maps of practicing Muslims, versus 48 percent of non-practicing Muslims. Krasnodar *Kray* was selected on 52 percent of the maps from practicing Muslims, versus 33 percent for non-practicing Muslims. Therefore, these results suggest that while responses from practicing Muslims were more concentrated, as demonstrated by the group's Map 3 composite, practicing Muslims had an overall wider scope of individual territories in which they made their selections. These responses tended therefore not to be based on the formalized territorial borders on the template map, and most of the participants in the group selected only parts of any given territory. Also, it is clear that practicing Muslims put heavy emphasis on the mountainous areas in the southern portion of the North Caucasus Federal District and Krasnodar *Kray*, showing an understanding of certain portions of these territories to be more strongly associated with the practice of Islam.

The theme of the mountains constituting a break between Russian dominated areas and areas where cultural norms and expectations are more traditional came up in many interviews, and may support this similar theme present with heavy concentrations of selections for Islamic salience in the mountains by Muslim participants. Participant V021, a 26-year old Christian man from Stavropol, offered:

> In Karachay-Cherkessia there are a lot of Orthodox people. Part of Kabardino-Balkaria has Orthodox people. However, I would not include places like Grozny and Mahachkala, or cities in other very mountainous areas. Even in areas of Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria where the Karachay and Balkar populations are heavily concentrated, we do not really see many Russians, or other Orthodox believers.

Although not a Muslim himself, the comments of Participant V026 clearly show the perceived association that rural and mountainous areas are perceived to be more heavily Islamic. Similar

comments offered by Participant V034, a Christian who had claimed to live in various mountainous in the North Caucasus and in Georgia. According to participant V034:

> Some people in the mountainous regions still live back in time, in a very underdeveloped state. Stavropol acts as a kind of a buffer zone between these underdeveloped areas, and the rest of Russia. Stavropol also helps to keep the Muslims of Russia in touch with Russia, and less in touch with other Islamic populations in Southwest Asia or South Asia. Therefore, I think the fact the Muslim populations are concentrated heavily in the North Caucasus is deliberate.

Participant V034's comments further underscore the idea that the study area's general population is aware of the perceived differences between the mountains and the lowland areas in the North Caucasus region. He also hints on the fact that the North Caucasus, or at least the mountainous areas of the region, might be considered salient for Islam in a formalized sense. These comments, when aligned with those made by Participant V006 concerning his perception that the composition of Stavropol *Kray* would soon become roughly 50 percent Russian and 50 percent non-Russian, present a very interesting viewpoint, putting Stavropol *Kray* in play as a buffer between Russia proper and the mountains. Evidence of such an attitude is further proof of the awareness that the participants demonstrated concerning a perceived break between Russian and non-Russian culture, as well as Islamic- versus Christian-dominated culture, with Stavropol *Kray* as a transition zone in-between the two sides.

Chapter VII: Results and Analysis from Interviews and Qualitative Data

In addition to completing maps and surveys, which were covered in the previous two chapters, I also interviewed participants who were willing to discuss their surveys and map responses with me one-on-one. In total, 36 participants agreed to conduct oral interviews, thus elaborating on the selections the participants had made, and sharing their opinions on the subjects of federal district reform, ethno-federalism, territorial differentiation and characteristics, regional structure and territorial relationships, geopolitical relations, and their feelings on the subject of national identity in the North Caucasus. Allowing the participants to freely comment on their selections and contributions to the data set provided me with an opportunity to explore their reasoning and attitudes qualitatively, in order to gain a deeper perspective on various trends that appeared when analyzing the study's quantitative data.

Encouraging participants to discuss their data selections and decisions was useful for gathering anecdotal evidence that provided insights into each of the study's research questions. Concerning Research Question 1 ("How do people in the North Caucasus recognize and define this region?"), participants were free to list specific places, namely cities, or other place-based markers of identity when discussing their preferences for the survey's dependent variables. For Research Question 2 ("How strongly do participants associate with specifically defined territorial (Ethno-Federal) constructions as identity markers: Russian Federation, Federal District, *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic?), participants were able to comment on their preferences for territories, along with providing their own opinions on borders, federal district reform, and issues of ethno-federalism and titular status, if the participants themselves chose to evoke these themes. Adding to my evidence for Research Question 3 ("How are issues of civic-nationalism and associations with civic and ethnic Russian culture viewed in the North Caucasus?"), participants were free to

comment on their associations with the dependent variable "Russian Citizenship," as well as their feelings on "Nationality," again providing qualitative insights on survey data trends. Finally, for Research Question 4 (How do people in the North Caucasus view state policies aimed at regionalization?), participants' comments on federal districts and relations between the North Caucasus and Federal Center provided valuable qualitative insights concerning regional power dynamics.

Along with any comments participants wished to offer in regard to the survey and map data, I also asked them to answer a series of scripted questions, each one addressing particular nuances in my four research questions (see the list of interview questions in Chapter IV). I designed these questions to specifically elicit responses and opinions on whether or not nationality constitutes a major social factor in contemporary Russian society, and whether or not ethno-federalism provides advantages for Russia. I also asked them to state their opinions on the status of the North Caucasus as a region, in terms of it geopolitical importance and overall role within Russia, as well as on the status of Stavropol as a territory and its sense of regional belonging, or lack thereof, in the North Caucasus. Additionally, I also requested that the participants comment on how accurate they believed the information they could access through the mass media to be, in comparison to what they actually saw happening in the North Caucasus region through their own lived experiences. Therefore, I was able to gather first-hand qualitative data regarding participants' reactions to the representation of their region in practical and popular geopolitical discourse, their views of Russia's geopolitical goals for the North Caucasus, and their assessments of North Caucasus territorial integrity, economic strategies, and security issues. Although I asked the participants a series of questions, each participant was free to say as little or

as much as he or she wanted, to speak about his or her opinions on this project or its goals, and to add any other information or topic for the record.

The coding scheme I designed to organize, code, and analyze qualitative data for this project is based closely on a technique known as "Human Present Coding for Response-Based Messages," which has been cited as an effective way for measuring multiple content dimensions in participant interview data (Abdelal, 2009) and (Johnston et al., 2009). The interview data and records of the interviews, along with the content, are displayed here in a four-part coding scheme. Tables 1 and 2 below constitute general information on the interviews, including participants' biographical data, the length of the interviews (after I translated and transcribed them), as well as the dates and locations of when and where the interviews took place. The following sections of this chapter reflect on coding for macro identity constructs, which deal with each participant's specific view of self-identification, role-identification and collective identification. The next few sections of the coding scheme isolate content related to theoretical constructs, previously outlined in Chapter II, including territoriality and problem solving, structure of social expectations, affect and feelings, civic identity, ethno-national identity, and region as brand. Finally, in the last few sections of the scheme, I coded for information related specifically to perceived and available media content, along with perceptions on intra/inter regional relations.

General Information:

Table 7.1 – General Biographic Information for Interview Participants

ID #	Nationality	Birth Place	Age	Gender	Native Language	Religion
V003	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Nevinnomysk, Stavropol *Kray*	24	Female	Russian	Orthodox Christian, Not Practicing
V004	Russian, Not Practicing Traditions	Irkutsk	25	Male	Russian	Orthodox Christian, Not Practicing
V005	Dargin, Practicing Traditions	Astrakhan	33	Male	Dargin	Islam, Not Practicing
V006	Armenian/Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	18	Male	Russian	Atheist
V007	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Blagodarny, Stavropol *Kray*	19	Female	Russian	Christian, Practicing
V008	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Astana, Kazakhstan	19	Female	Russian	Christian, Practicing
V009	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	21	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V010	Armenian, Not Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	19	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V011	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	20	Female	Russian	Atheist
V012	Russian, Not Practicing Traditions	Besnoe, Stavropol *Kray*	18	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V013	Russian, Not Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	21	Female	Russian	Christian, Practicing
V014	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	22	Female	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V015	Russian, Not Practicing Traditions	Ipatovo, Stavropol *Kray*	22	Female	Russian	Christian, Practicing
V016	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Kursavka Villiage, Stavropol *Kray*	18	Female	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V017	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Kalinovskoe Villiage, Stavropol *Kray*	18	Female	Russian	Christian, Practicing

V018	Armenian, Practicing Traditions	Budennovsk, Stavropol *Kray*	19	Female	Armenian	Christian, Not Practicing
V019	Russian, Not Practicing Traditions	Chita	21	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V020	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	25	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V021	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	26	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V022	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	26	Female	Russian	Christian, Practicing
V023	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	24	Female	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V024	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	30	Male	Russian	Christian, Practicing
V025	Karachay, Practicing Traditions	Karachaevsk, Karachay-Cherkessia	30	Male	Karachay	Islam, Not Practicing
V027	Karachay, Practicing Traditions	Teberda, Karachay-Cherkessia	29	Female	Karachay	Islam, Not Practicing
V028	Nogay, Practicing Traditions	Karachaevsk, Karachay-Cherkessia	28	Female	Nogay	Islam, Not Practicing
V029	Nogay, Practicing Traditions	Adyge-Khabl, Karachay-Cherkessia	30	Male	Nogay	Islam, Practicing
V030	Armenian, Practicing Traditions	Yerevan, Armenia	25	Female	Armenian	Christian, Practicing
V031	Armenian, Practicing Traditions	Yerevan, Armenia	23	Female	Armenian	Christian, Not Practicing
V033	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	26	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V034	Greek, Practicing Traditions	Marneuli, Georgia	31	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V035	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	33	Female	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V036	Nogay, Not Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	24	Female	Nogay	Islam, Not Practicing
V037	Armenian, Not Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	30	Female	Russian	Christian, Practicing

V038	Armenian, Not Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	30	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V039	Russian, Not Practicing Traditions	Stavropol	24	Male	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing
V040	Russian, Practicing Traditions	Rostov-on-Don	24	Female	Russian	Christian, Not Practicing

Table 7.2 – General Interview Details

ID #	Date	Place of Interview	# of Sentences	# of Fragments
V003	June 3, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	47	24
V004	June 4, 2013	Stavropol, Northeast	62	6
V005	June 5, 2013	Stavropol, Northeast	72	9
V006	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	49	4
V007	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	14	2
V008	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	21	6
V009	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	15	2
V010	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	19	3
V011	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	17	2
V012	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	8	3
V013	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	20	7
V014	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	26	3
V015	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	23	2
V016	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	16	0
V017	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	14	4
V018	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	17	5
V019	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	22	2
V020	June 11, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	17	8
V021	June 13, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	70	7
V022	June 17, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	45	9
V023	June 18, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	47	5
V024	June 19, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	51	8
V025	June 22, 2013	Karachaevsk, Karachay-Cherkessia	52	7
V027	June 22, 2013	Teberda, Karachay-Cherkessia	54	6
V028	June 22, 2013	Teberda, Karachay-Cherkessia	65	15
V029	June 22, 2013	Adyge-Khabl, Karachay-Cherkessia	66	7
V030	June 23, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	32	11
V031	June 23, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	39	10
V033	June 25, 2013	Stavropol, Northeast	11	4
V034	June 26, 2013	Stavropol, Northeast	29	6

V035	June 26, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	60	7
V036	June 26, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	49	8
V037	June 27, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	46	4
V038	June 28, 2013	Stavropol, Northwest	11	2
V039	June 28, 2013	Stavropol, City Center	35	5
V040	July 2, 2013	Stavropol, Tashla Neighborhood	15	0

Macro Identity Construct: Self-Identification

When coding for self-identification, I isolated passages in the interviews that specifically pertained to the participant, and were noted in the first-person. For example, a passage such as "I am a citizen of the Russian Federation, so I appreciate the rights afforded to me by our constitution" would be counted in the scheme under this overall macro identity construct. If a participant said "Citizens of the Russian Federation" the passage was not counted in this section, even though the participant could have indicated his or her citizenship on the survey.

I believe that coding for passages in the first person provides a sense of personal investment, belief, or belonging to a particular identity marker. By recording the frequency at which identity markers were referenced in the first person, I was able to discern the basic degree to which participants tended to be invested in two place-based markers, the North Caucasus and the Russian Federation, as well as their ethno-national groups, more than other markers. On average, participants spoke in the first-person 40.1 percent of the time during the interviews, suggesting that they were not hesitant to personally claim a stake in the identity markers to which they associated.

Table 7.3 – Coding Scheme for Self-Identification

ID #	Sentence, Fragments	Percentage	Identity Markers with which Participant Identified in First Person
V003	10,2	16.9	Russian Citizenship; Russian Orthodoxy; Southern Federal District; North Caucasus Region
V004	23,0	33.8	Multiple ethnic identities; Stavropol; Stavropol *Kray*
V005	21,4	30.9	Islam; Dargin Nation; Russian Citizenship; Dagestan; North Caucasus Region
V006	20,5	47.2	Multiple ethnic identities; Stavropol; Russian language; Armenian language
V007	8,2	62.5	Russian Nation; University Student
V008	10,2	44.4	Russian Nation; North Caucasus Region
V009	5,0	29.4	Russian Nation; North Caucasus Region
V010	16,0	72.7	Russian Nation; Russian Federation
V011	6,0	31.6	Russian Nation
V012	3,0	27.3	North Caucasus Region
V013	13,4	63	Stavropol; North Caucasus; Russian Nation
V014	4,0	13.8	Russian Federation; North Caucasus Region; NCFD; Stavropol
V015	7,2	36	Russian Nation; Russian Federation
V016	8,0	50	Russian Nation; North Caucasus
V017	8,2	55.6	North Caucasus; Russian Nation
V018	9,3	50	Armenian Nation; Armenian Language; Russian Language; North Caucasus Region
V019	10,0	41.7	Russian Federation; North Caucasus Region; Stavropol *Kray*
V020	5,3	32	Russian Federation
V021	14,2	20.8	Russian Federation; North Caucasus; Russian Orthodoxy
V022	16,2	33.3	South of Russia; Russian Orthodoxy; North Caucasus; Russian Nation
V023	23,0	44.2	Russian Federation; Russian Orthodoxy; Russian Nation

V024	12,4	27.1	Russian Federation; Russian Orthodoxy; Stavropol *Kray*
V025	27,0	45.8	Karachay-Cherkessia; Russian Federation; Karachay Nation; Islam
V027	21,4	41.7	Russian Federation; Karachay-Cherkessia; Karachay Nation; Islam
V028	23,4	33.8	Nogay Nation; Nogay Woman; Russian Federation; Karachay-Cherkessia; Stavropol *Kray*; Islam
V029	21,0	28.8	Nogay Nation; Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus; Russian Federation
V030	9,2	25.6	Armenian Language; Armenian Nation; Christianity
V031	21,2	46.9	Armenian Language; Armenian Nation; North Caucasus; Russian Federation
V033	5,3	53.3	Stavropol; Stavropol *Kray*; Russian Federation; Southern Russian
V034	27,2	82.9	Non-Russian; Greek Nation; South of Russia; North Caucasus; Stavropol
V035	19,2	31.3	Russian Language; South of Russia; North Caucasus Federal District; Southern Russian Culture
V036	15,3	31.6	Russian Language; Russian Federation; North Caucasus; Southern Russia; Nogay Nation; Stavropol
V037	29,0	58	Armenian Nation; Christianity; Russian Language; Stavropol; North Caucasus
V038	2,0	15.8	Russian Nation
V039	21,4	62.5	Russian Language; Russian Federation; Stavropol; Russian Orthodoxy; North Caucasus
V040	5,2	53.3	Russian Nation; North Caucasus; Russian Federation

Coding from the interviews for participant self-identification revealed several interesting trends in the data. First and foremost was the fact that two place-based identity markers were by far the most common constructs with which participants identified in the first-person: the North Caucasus, with 19 participant self-identifications, and the Russian Federation with 16 self-identifications. While I expected to find this trend with the Russian Federation, as it registered the highest overall mean score of all the dependent variables in the survey data, in terms of importance for identity, I was somewhat surprised to see the North Caucasus mentioned with

first person references in three more interviews than the Russian Federation. The "North Caucasus," in terms of the survey data, was one of the least popular markers of identity, as it lagged behind formal territories in terms of importance ranking among the participants overall. However, the "North Caucasus" and the "Russian Federation" are constructs with which each interview participant could identify, so each had a chance to be mentioned in the first person by every participant. However, *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic scale territories, as a group, were mentioned only 10 times, Stavropol *Kray* with six first-person identifications, Karachay-Cherkessia with three and Dagestan with one.

Another observation I made when coding for first-person identification was that while the North Caucasus was identified in 19 interviews (52 percent) with first-person association, the North Caucasus Federal District (NCFD) was mentioned in the first-person in only one interview. When compared to the survey rakings, participants overall said that the NCFD was more important than the North Caucasus as a vernacular construct. However, when speaking freely on topics related to the region, participants overwhelmingly preferred to reference the "North Caucasus" as a vernacular region.

Finally, in terms of social identity markers, participants spoke about their ethno-national group in the first person more often than their religions or native languages. 61 percent of the participants mentioned their national identity in the first person, including 12 ethnic Russians, three Armenians, three Nogays, two Karachays, and one Dargin. In contrast, religion was mentioned in the first person in 33 percent of the interviews, with eight such references to Christianity and four to Islam. Languages were mentioned in the first-person in 22 percent of the interviews, four by ethnic Russians and four by Armenians. Also, while nearly all of the non-Russian participants referenced their national group, many ethnic Russians did not.

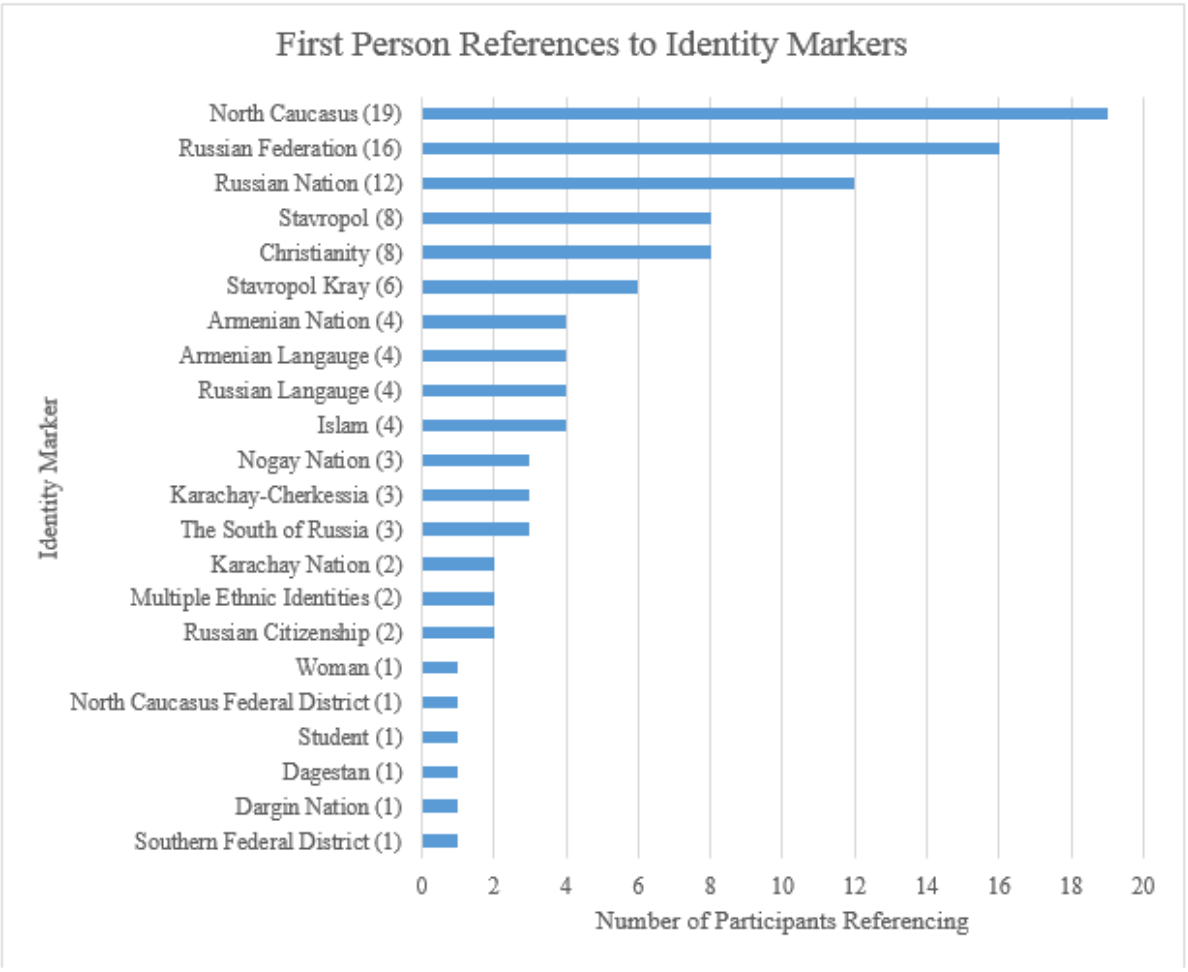

Figure 7.1 – First Person References to Identity Markers in Interviews

Macro Identity Construct: Role Identification

To code for role identification, I isolated passages from the interview transcripts in which participants referred to specific social, political, emotional, and/or economic roles, uses, or functions performed or associated with the study's various identity markers. For example, a comment such as "Karachay-Cherkessia is an incubator for nationalism" was coded as a role for Karachay-Cherkessia, and a comment such as "Russia is the guarantor of rights and laws in the North Caucasus" was coded as a role for the Russian Federation, and a comment such as "Islam

provides a common method for cultural exchange" was coded under as a role for Religion. In total, I determined that 27.4 percent of the total interview content was applicable for role identification in the coding scheme.

I categorized these passages in groups, which corresponded to the depended variables that I analyzed from the survey data. Roles associated to Russia as whole, the federal government, and/or the country's federal scale institutions, were counted for "Russian Federation." References to the North Caucasus in general, or in a vernacular sense were categorized into "North Caucasus." Any passages dealing with the role of nationality as a concept, roles as they applied to ethnic relations, or any specific national group were, were counted in "Nationality." Roles of sub-federal territories were counted under "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic." Roles of local scale territories were grouped under City/Village/*Aul*. References to roles of language, or any specific languages in the study area were grouped as "Language," with the same logic for religious references being grouped into "Religion." Finally, the references to roles played by Federal Districts, both the North Caucasus Federal District and Southern Federal district were grouped under "Federal District."

Table 7.4 – Coding Scheme for Role Identification

ID #	**Sentences, Fragments**	**Percentage**	**Identity Marker/Construct Associated with Role**
V003	14,2	22.5	Religion; Russian Federation; Republics; Nationality
V004	9,2	16.2	Stavropol *Kray*; Stavropol; Nationality
V005	8,1	11.1	North Caucasus; Dargin National Identity; Dagestan; Chechnya
V006	9,0	17	Russian Federation; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*; Pyatigorsk
V007	3,0	18.8	Nationality; Individual/Citizenship
V008	3,4	26	Nationality
V009	3,0	17.6	Nationality
V010	2,1	13.6	Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus Federal District
V011	2,0	10.5	North Caucasus

V012	3,0	27.3	Nationality as a platform for political organization
V013	0,0	0	
V014	3,0	10.3	The North Caucasus; Chechnya; Dagestan
V015	7,2	36	Individual/Citizen; North Caucasus; Stavropol
V016	2,0	12.5	North Caucasus
V017	3,0	16.7	Stavropol *Kray*
V018	4,1	22.7	Nationality
V019	6,2	33.3	Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*; Individual/Citizen
V020	4,3	28	North Caucasus
V021	11,2	11.7	Islam; Republics; Russian Language; North Caucasus
V022	7,0	13	North Caucasus; South of Russia
V023	11,3	7.7	Russian Federation; ethnic Russian nationality; Orthodox Christianity; North Caucasus; Stavropol
V024	22,4	44.1	Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*; Stavropol; Pyatigorsk; North Caucasus Federal District; North Caucasus
V025	20,3	39	Karachay-Cherkessia; Stavropol *Kray*; Russian Federation; Individual/Citizen; Islam
V027	14,2	26.7	Russian Federation; Republics; Karachay-Cherkessia; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*
V028	28,4	40	Karachay-Cherkessia; Islam; Stavropol *Kray*; Individual/Citizenship; the North Caucasus; Azerbaijan
V029	25,3	38.4	North Caucasus; Vladikavkaz; Russian Federation; Republics; Stavropol *Kray*
V030	17,2	44.2	Pyatigorsk; North Caucasus Federal District; Armenian nationality; Stavropol *Kray*
V031	17,3	40.8	Nationality, Language; Religion; Individual/Citizen; Stavropol; Krasnodar; Rostov; Armenian Language; Baku; Nagorno-Karabakh; North Caucasus Federal District
V033	9,0	60	Abkhazia; South Ossetia; North Caucasus Region; Stavropol; North Caucasus
V034	16,5	60	Pyatigorsk; Stavropol; North Caucasus; Stavropol
V035	18,3	31.3	Russian Language; Individual/Citizen; Southern person; The South of Russia; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*
V036	10,0	17.5	The North Caucasus; Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*
V037	9,2	22	North Caucasus Federal District; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*
V038	6,2	61.5	North Caucasus; Stavropol
V039	12,0	30	North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*; Russian Language

V040	7,2	60	North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*

With 21 participants assigning roles to various *Kray*, *Oblast*, and Republic scale territories, sub-federal territories were the most common constructs to identify in association with functions, roles, or territorial purpose. Of all of the *kray*s, *oblast*s, and republics coded for role identification, Stavropol *Kray* was the most popular, which was to be expected since the majority of the interviews were conducted in that territory. Participants discussed Stavropol *Kray*'s role an ethnic Russian territory in the North Caucasus Federal District, as an area of natural beauty, as an agrarian territory, as a territory dominated by ethnic Russian language and culture, as a transition area between Russian and non-Russian space, as a multi-national territory, as part of the Steppe, as a place of unique Russian traditions, and as a displaced territory in the context of the North Caucasus Federal District.

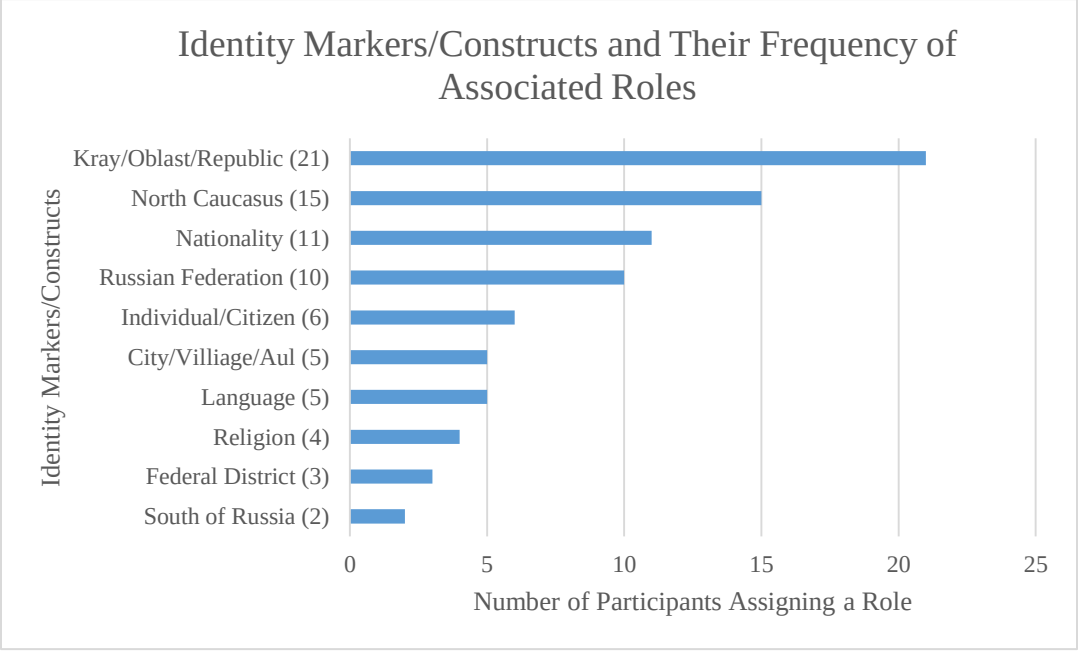

Figure 7.2 – Major Identity Markers used in Participants' Role Identification

Several other sub-federal territories, in addition to Stavropol *Kray*, were associated with roles by the participants. Chechnya was discussed as an oil producer, as well as a general producer of natural resources. Dagestan was also cited for its role as a natural resource provider. Karachay-Cherkessia was discussed in its role as a republic (independent from Stavropol *Kray*), as a part of Russia, as a territory designated for Islam, and as a tourist destination. In addition, several participants' comments on republics in general, suggesting them to be dependent on Russia's federal center for development, and as incubators for nationalism.

The North Caucasus, discussed as a vernacular region, was the next most frequently mentioned identity marker in terms of role associations, with 15 participants identifying roles for the region. Participants discussed social roles for the North Caucasus, including its role as a multi-national region and as a place of unique habits, different to the way people behave in other regions of Russia. In the context of Russia, participants noted the North Caucasus's role as a border region, as a frontier region, and as a security risk, as well as a part of the greater Russian South. In terms of economic roles for the North Caucasus, participants described the region as an object of development, as a natural resource provider, and as a region of great natural beauty and thus high tourism potential.

The concept of "Nationality (*Natsionalnost*)," or particular national groups, was described according to role identification by 11 participants. Participants spoke about roles played by the concept of nationality such as, its usefulness as a device for creating a sense of ethnic culture, as a deterrent for development and economic destabilization, as a form of social stratification, and as a platform for political organization. National traditions were discussed in the role of cultural preservation. Additionally, Russian culture was associated with the role as the default nationality, against which other North Caucasus National groups are measured.

The "Russian Federation," a category which included participants' comments on federal scale entities, was associated with role identification in 10 interviews. The roles of the Russian Federation included its status and responsibilities as a multi-national state, as a provider of financial resources and guarantor of economic development to sub-federal territories, as a container of civic-Russian (*Rossiskaya*) culture, as a part of and participant in the "civilized world," as a promoter of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The Russian Federation was also cited as a granter of rights and maker of laws for Russia's sub-federal territories.

With six participants speaking in regard to roles of individual citizens of Russia, the category Individual/Citizen was the next most mentioned in terms of role identification. Participants mostly mentioned each citizen of Russia as responsible for his or her own behavior and life decisions. Participants who commented on roles of individuals also tended to mention social status and success as dependent on each person's abilities, access to education, and willingness to accept the basic norms of civic-Russian society.

Although sub-federal territories, like Stavropol *Kray*, or Karachay-Cherkessia, were discussed more in terms of role identification than cities were, five participants associated various cities in the study area with specific roles. Stavropol was the most commonly mentioned city. Stavropol was associated with roles as a part of Russia, as a part of the North Caucasus, as a multi-national city, as an historical place of defense against non-Russian forces, as an important city for conflict prevention, as a place designated for Christianity in the North Caucasus, as a city designated for ethnic Russian culture in the North Caucasus Federal district, as an important city for Russia's Armenian diaspora, as a place of higher learning and culture, and as a place for entertainment and night life. Other cities mentioned were Pyatigorsk, in its role as the administrative capital of the North Caucasus Federal District, and several cities cited

by Armenian participants as being important for the Armenian diaspora in addition to Stavropol, which included Rostov-on-Don, Krasnodar and Baku.

Five participants also commented on "Language" for role identification, either as a concept, or as specific languages having roles. Non-Russian languages in general were discussed, in a collective sense, as an "other" in the context of the Russian Federation. Russian language though was mentioned most often, and was mentioned in terms of its role as the *lingua franca* of the North Caucasus region.

The concept of "Religion" or various religions was associated with roles by three participants. As a concept, religion was discussed as providing social access to stratified segments of the North Caucasus' population. Islam was associated with the roles of inclusion and problem solving among Muslim groups. Orthodox Christianity was discussed in the role of promoting tolerance and advocating for social acceptance in the North Caucasus.

Three participants associated particular roles with The North Caucasus Federal District. First, the NCFD was discussed in the role as a provider of regional structure, as it formally defines the North Caucasus region. Additionally, the NCFD was associated with a role as a container of multiple national groups, and as a device to separate non-Russian nationalities of the North Caucasus from greater ethnic Russian space outside of the region. Finally, the NCFD was discussed as having a role of division and separation in the South of Russia, and as reconfiguring and changing the economic and political identity of Stavropol *Kray*.

Finally, two participants suggested roles specifically for the "South of Russia." This vernacular region was discussed as an agricultural area, as a tourist destination, and as a heavy recipient federal support, primarily due to the development of Sochi in the lead up to the 2014 Winter Olympics.

Macro Identity Construct: Collective Identification

To code for collective identification across the dependent variable identity markers, I isolated descriptive information regarding the participant's belonging to, or exclusion from a social group, or territorial identity marker. I differentiated between in-group versus out-group references in the interviews of each participant, according to the study's dependent variables. Statements that constituted in-group references showed collective ownership, or identification. For example, a passage such as "We Russians are the cultural backbone of the region," counts as an in-group reference, while "Islamic traditions are dangerous for Russian society" would count as an out-group reference, supposing said participant did not self-identify as a Muslim. Overall 35.1 percent of the total interview passages were coded as representing collective identification.

Table 7.5 – Coding Scheme for Collective Identification

ID #	Sentences/Fragments	Percentage	In-Group References	Out-Group References
V003	14/3	20.8	Russian citizenship; Russian language; Christianity; Stavropol *Kray*	Islam; Cossacks; Chechens; Dagestanis; North Caucasus Republics; Russian Territories outside of Stavropol *Kray*
V004	12/3	43.8	Stavropol; Russian Citizenship; North Caucasus	Idealized Russian culture; North Caucasus nationalities; Karachays; Ossetians; Moscow; Islam
V005	16/4	48.1	Islam; Dargin Language; Dagestan; Mekigi (Village); North Caucasus; Stavropol; Russian Federation	Siberia; Moscow; Astrakhan; ethnic Russians; Armenians; Christianity; Adegeya; Kabardins
V006	11/0	47.1	Ethnic Russian; Armenian; Ukrainian; Armenian language; Russian language;	North Caucasus Nationalities

			Russian Citizenship; Stavropol	
V007	7/0	36.4	Ethnic Russian; Students; Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus	Non-Russians
V008	10/3	47.4	South of Russia; Ethnic Russian; North Caucasus; Stavropol	North Caucasus Nationalities; Republics; Chechnya; Non-Russians
V009	7/1	27.3	Stavropol; North Caucasus; Russian Federation	North Caucasus Nationalities
V010	6/2	33.3	Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus Federal District	Republics
V011	8/1	48.3	Ethnic Russian; *Kray*s and *Oblast*s; Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus	Republics; non-Russians
V012	3/0	20	North Caucasus; Russian Federation	Other regions of Russian (beyond the North Caucasus)
V013	7/2	43.8	Ethnic Russian; Saint Petersburg; Moscow; Russian Federation; Stavropol	North Caucasus; Republics; non-Russians
V014	11/3	22.2	Ethnic Russian; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus Federal District	Dagestan; non-Russians; Cossacks
V015	5/0	22.7	North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*; Russian Federation	Georgia
V016	6/1	20.8	Ethnic Russian; *Kray*s; *Oblast*s; North Caucasus	Non-Russian; Republics
V017	4/0	20	North Caucasus; Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*	
V018	5/0	27.3	Stavropol; North Caucasus; Russian Federation	

V019	4/1	20.8	Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus; Russian Federation	
V020	3/2	20	Ethnic Russian; North Caucasus; Stavropol	Republics
V021	19/3	27.2	Ethnic Russian; Russian Orthodoxy; Slavic; Stavropol *Kray*; Russian Federation; North Caucasus	Muslims; Ossetians; Armenians; Georgians; Moscow; Abkhazia; South Ossetia; Karachay-Cherkessia; Kabardino-Balkaria; Karachays; Cherkess
V022	22/4	48.1	Russian Orthodoxy; South of Russia; North Caucasus; Krasnodar; Rostov; Astrakhan; Eastern Ukraine; Stavropol *Kray*	Turkey; Iran; Other Regions of Russia; Moscow; North Caucasus Nationalities
V023	17/2	36.5	Ethnic Russian; Russian Orthodoxy; North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District; Russian Federation	Moscow; Republics; Ukraine
V024	8/0	13.6	Russian Federation; ethnic Russians	Foreign Countries; Chechnya; Ingushetia
V025	9/3	20.3	Karachay; Karachay language; Islam; Russian Federation; Karachay-Cherkessia; Caucasus	Pyatigorsk; Kislovodsk; Stavropol; Adygea; ethnic Russians
V027	17/1	30	Karachay; Karachay language; Karachay-Cherkessia; Republics; Russian Federation; North Caucasus	Stavropol *Kray*; Krasnodar *Kray*; Adygea
V028	26/2	35	Nogay; Nogay language; Nogay National Traditions; Islam; Sunni	Azeris; Shia Muslims; Wahhabis; Stavropol; Stavropol *Kray*

			Muslims; North Caucasus; Republics	
V029	29/4	42.5	Nogay; Nogay language; Stavropol; Karachay-Cherkessia; Islam; Russian Federation; Turkic Nationalities	Ethnic Russian; Orthodox Christianity; Karachays; Cherkess; Germany; Europe; Moscow; Tatarstan; Slavic; Dagestanis; Ukrainians; Dagestan
V030	20/1	48.9	Armenian; Armenian language; Stavropol; Yerevan; Karabakh; Baku; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus Federal District	Moscow; Azerbaijan; North Caucasus Nationalities
V031	18/3	42.9	Russian Citizenship; Armenian; Armenian language; Russian language; North Caucasus; Stavropol; Baku; North Caucasus Federal District	Karabakh; Islam; North Caucasus Nationalities; Chechnya
V033	14/2	21.3	North Caucasus; Russian Federation; Stavropol; Slavic Nationalities	Abkhazia; South Ossetia; non-Slavic Nationalities; Mahachkala
V034	15/1	45.7	Greek; North Caucasus; Russian Language; Stavropol; North Caucasus Federal District; Stavropol *Kray*; Southern Russia	Krasnodar *Kray*; Chechnya; Northern Russia; Former Union Republics
V035	17/4	31.3	Russian language; Russian Federation; South of Russia; Ukraine; ethnic Russian; Stavropol *Kray*	North Russia; Central Russia; non-Russians; North Caucasus Nationalities
V036	13/1	24.6	Russian citizenship; Russian language; Russian Federation;	Moscow

			South of Russia; North Caucasus; Nogay language; Turkic; Stavropol *Kray*	
V037	10/2	24	Russian citizenship; Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*; Russian language; Armenian; Armenian language; Armenian Apostolic Christians	Federal Center; Chechnya; Orthodox Christians
V038	4/0	30.8	North Caucasus; Stavropol; North Caucasus Federal District	
V039	16/1	42.5	Ethnic Russian; Ukrainian; Russian language; Stavropol; Russian Federation; North Caucasus; Russian Orthodoxy	Ukrainian language; Georgians; non-Russians; Karachay-Cherkessia; Ukraine; Chechnya; Islam
V040	6/0	40	Ethnic Russian; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*; Stavropol	North Caucasus Nationalities; non-Russians; Republics; Federal Center

The most common identity marker to be mentioned in terms of collective identification was "Nationality," which had total 42 participant references. 21 participants cited their nationalities with in-group references, and 21 participants identified other nationalities in out-group references. The fact that this identify marker was so commonly invoked in collective identification suggests that nationality is a construct by which participants clearly defined and separated social groups. In addition, participants collectively identified with nationality much more frequently than other social identity markers, such as Native Language (18 participants referencing), Religion (18 referencing), and Citizenship (11 referencing). It is also important to

note that participants were as likely to reference their own national groups, with in-group references, as they were to describe other national groups, with out-group references.

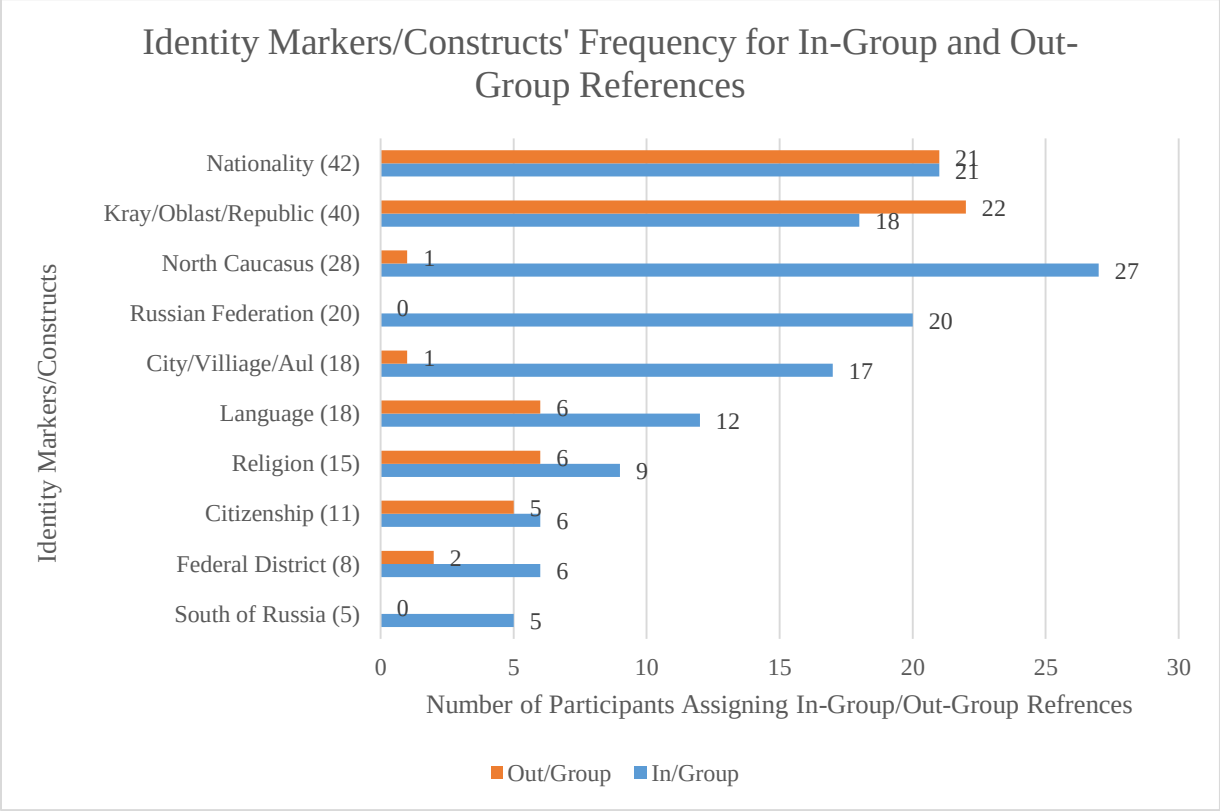

Figure 7.3 – Major In-Group/Out-Group Identity Markers coded for in Collective Identification

I coded 40 instances of collective identification related to the dependent variable *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic. As was the case with "Nationality," participants tended to reference their perceptions of *kray*s, *oblast*s, or republics as both in-group and out-group collective identity markers. The interviews of 22 participants featured "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic" as out-group markers, thus refereeing to "other" groups and territories to identify collective traits, ownership, or characteristics. "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic" was the most common dependent variable to be used for out-group collective references. However, 18 interviews cited *kray*s, *oblast*s, or republics for in-group collective identification. These formalized territories proved to be popular constructs

for collective identity, as well as defining and understanding lines between participants' own identity groups and other groups.

"North Caucasus," as a vernacular region, was the next most commonly cited dependent variable for collective identification. In total, 28 participants used it to describe collective traits. However, while "Nationality" and "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," had been referenced in both in-group and out-group examples, collective identity references for "North Caucasus" were almost entirely in-group, with 27 participants. Only one participant referenced the "North Caucasus" in an out-group sense. This trend suggests an overall agreement regarding a cohesive ownership and in-group affinity to the North Caucasus as an identity marker, at least in a vernacular sense, which is perhaps not surprising as all of the interviews took place in the region, and all of the participants had lived in the region for at least some time. However, because participants were free not to associate with the North Caucasus, the tendency to claim the region with in-group references suggests that there is an overall vested interested in the region, felt collectively by its young adult population.

Similar to "North Caucasus" the dependent variable "Russian Federation" was also commonly referenced in terms of in-group collective identity, as coding revealed 20 in-group collective identity references with zero out-group references. Again, participants likely had no reason to describe Russia at the federal scale in terms of out-group identity, as all of the participants could logically associate with the Russian Federation as an identity marker. However, the fact that "Russian Federation" was mentioned 20 times shows that just over half of the participants noted a federal scale sense of collective identification, while just under half of the participants either focused on finer scales, or chose to reference non-territorial identity markers. It also should be noted that, although "Russian Federation" is a formal region, with

potential for all participants to claim it in a collective sense, more participants preferred to reference "North Caucasus" in their interviews.

The next most commonly referenced dependent variable for collective identity was "City/Village/*Aul*," with 18 total references. As was the case with "North Caucasus" and "Russian Federation," most of the references were in-group, as only one participant referenced a city (Stavropol) as an out group collective reference. This trend to view local, formalized territories in terms of in-group collective identity suggests that lived experiences in localized contexts are much more often a trigger for inclusive context, than exclusive understandings. By keeping the focus on cities for in-group examples, participants showed that their local geographies were important for collective understandings for territorial identity.

The non-placed variables "Native Language," "Religion" and "Citizenship," were the next most commonly referenced markers of collective identification. In total, 18 participants referencing Native Language, with 12 in-group passages and 6 out-group passages. I coded 15 total passages that referenced Religion in a collective sense, with 9 in-group and 6 out-group passages. Citizenship was referenced 11 times in a collective sense, with 6 in-group and 5 out-group references. For each of these three identity markers, there were both in-group and out-group references, however, in-group references were more common for all three variables. Because these three constructs are firmly defined, and multiple groups exist in the study area, I had expected these variables to be used for both in-group and out-group examples of collective identification.

The final two dependent variables, "Federal District" and "South of Russia" were the least commonly coded for collective identity. Eight passages referenced a Federal District in terms of collective identity, with six passages describing it for in-group collective identity, and

two for out-group. The South of Russia was mentioned only as an in-group marker for collective identity, and it appeared in 5 passages. Although these two dependent variables appeared sparingly throughout the interviews, participants overwhelmingly referenced *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic when referencing and describing their understandings of collective identity at the regional scale.

Theory-Based Construct: Territoriality and Problem Solving

To code for territoriality and problem solving across the dependent variable identity markers, I isolated descriptive information regarding the participant's references to objectives, action, or reaction to particular policy, and reference to positive outcomes versus negative outcomes regarding actions taken to these topics. There were two territorial policies or objectives pertinent to this study in particular, "Ethno-Federalism," and "Federal District Reform." In total, 15.2 percent of the interview transcripts pertained to participant's perceived out outcomes regarding Ethno-Federalism and Federal District Reform. Territorial policies and outcomes regarding ethno-federalism were coded in 33 total passages, with 13 passages referencing negative positive outcomes, and 20 relating to negative outcomes. Territorial policies and outcomes referencing Federal District Reform totaled 14 passages, with 7 passages suggesting positive outcomes, and 7 suggesting negative outcomes.

Table 7.6 – Coding Scheme for Territoriality and Problem Solving

ID #	Sentences/Fragments	Percentage	Territorial Policies/Objectives with Perceived Positive Outcomes	Territorial Policies/Objectives with Perceived Negative Outcomes
V003	9/0	12.7	Ethno-Federalism; Federal District Reform	Federal District Reform

V004	15/2	25	Ethno-Federalism; Federal District Reform	Ethno-Federalism
V005	6/0	7.4		Ethno-Federalism
V006	4/0	7.5	Federal District Reform	
V007	2/0	12.5	Ethno-Federalism	
V008	3/0	11.1	Ethno-Federalism	
V009	3/0	17.6	Ethno-Federalism	
V010	2/0	9.1		Ethno-Federalism
V011	4/1	26.3		Ethno-Federalism
V013	2/0	7.4		Ethno-Federalism
V014	5/1	20.7	Federal District Reform	Ethno-Federalism
V015	3/1	16	Ethno-Federalism	
V016	5/0	31.2		Ethno-Federalism
V017	1/0	5.6		Ethno-Federalism
V018	2/0	9.1	Ethno-Federalism	
V019	2/1	12.5		Ethno-Federalism
V020	3/1	16		Ethno-Federalism
V021	7/2	11.7	Ethno-Federalism	Ethno-Federalism
V022	3/0	5.6		Ethno-Federalism
V023	2/1	5.7		Ethno-Federalism
V024	4/0	6.8		Federal District Reform
V025	7/2	15.3	Ethno-Federalism	
V027	8/3	18.3		Federal District Reform; Ethno-Federalism
V028	7/2	11.3	Ethno-Federalism	
V029	10/1	15.1	Ethno-Federalism	Ethno-Federalism
V030	9/0	20.9	Ethno-Federalism; Federal District Reform	Federal District Reform
V031	0/2	4.1		Ethno-Federalism
V033	6/0	40	Ethno-Federalism	Ethno-Federalism
V034	12/2	40	Federal District Reform	Federal District Reform; Ethno-Federalism
V035	4/0	5.9		Federal District Reform
V036	5/0	8.8		Ethno-Federalism
V037	7/1	16		Ethno-Federalism
V038	2/2	30.8		Ethno-Federalism
V039	4/2	15		Federal District Reform
V040	3/1	26.7	Federal District Reform	

When discussing positive outcomes of ethno-federalism and its outcomes in contemporary Russia and for the North Caucasus region in particular, several themes were consistent in the interviews of multiple participants. Mostly, the positive comments were related to territorial autonomy for non-Russian nationalities, suggesting that autonomy ultimately solves, or prevents, potential problems in the region. Several participants noted that giving non-Russian ethnic groups official status and titular rights in republics was important than preserving non-Russian cultures, and thus, makes the Russian Federation a more authentic multi-national state and more tolerant and accepting of cultural diversity overall.

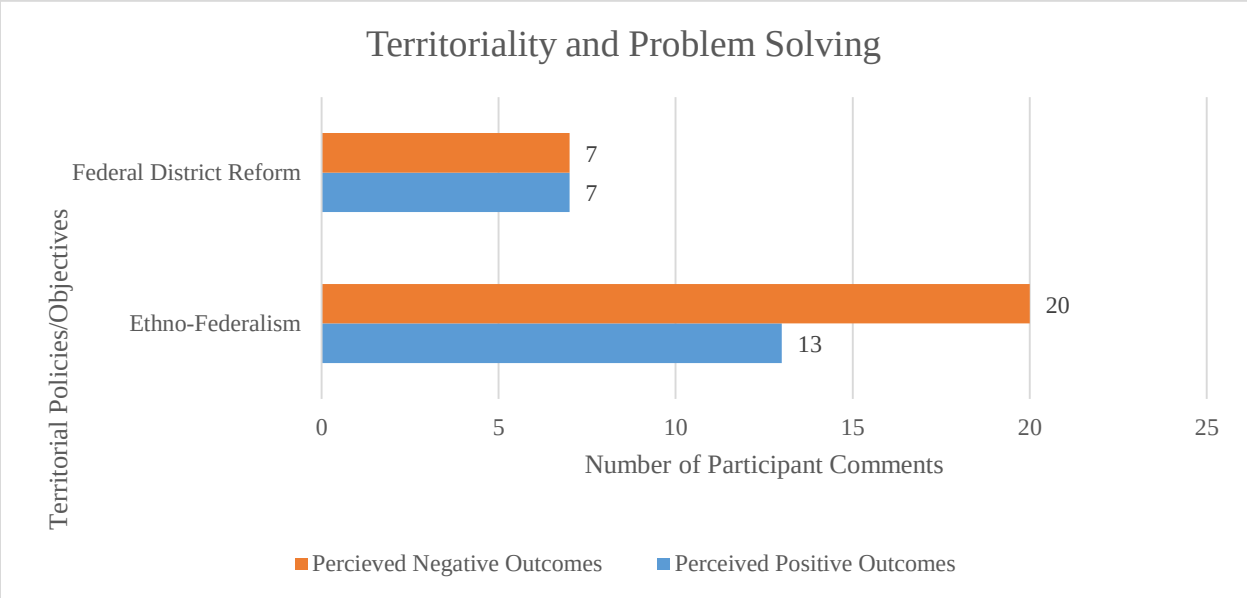

Figure 7.4 – Major Themes for Territoriality and Problem Solving

Ethno-federalism was cited by multiple participants as leading to positive outcomes in terms of conflict prevention, and defining boundaries of social order that are ultimately important for state stability. Participants noted that ethno-federalism policies result in clear territorial divisions whereby residents and citizens of the Russian Federation can understand local cultural expectations and behaviors, and determine where certain behaviors should be considered either

usual, or out of place. By territorializing the perceived appropriateness of national cultures, customs and behaviors, both ethnic Russians and non-Russian groups are guaranteed social environments in which their respective cultures can be practiced officially, ideally without major interference from outside groups. Such an attitude can be observed in these comments from Participant V004:

> I consider that separating our (Russian federal) territories creates advantages for some. I would like to think that there are other reasons for separation other than just dividing territories based on nationality. It is probably good to let people have a place where they can fully express their cultures. I have got a brother in North Ossetia and I have been there a few times. I have noticed that the people there are fully able to express Ossetian culture, which I see as a positive thing for them. It is better for Russia if these places exist, where people can feel free to behave as they are supposed to by culture … but it is problematic when people from these places move to other areas, like Moscow for example … If people have separate territories, then they also feel led to accentuate separate cultural practices and divide themselves off from the rest of the greater population. Now, I see everybody connecting with their own national groups, which is the result I believe the system is trying to achieve.

Participant V004's opinions on the effects of ethno-federalism show the value of the concept in terms of its ability to impact perceptions on sense of place. According to Tuan (1974), sense of place is an important aspect for a population's behavior and actions because people rely on their own awareness of sense of place to know how to act, and to determine which behaviors are acceptable in certain geographies. Through maintaining its ethno-federal system, in which republics and *kray*s, whose social norms and legal systems are founded upon state-approved sets ethno-national standards, Russia works to formalize notions of sense of place among its various populations. Therefore, constructing sets of social norms, which are formalized in specific territories, is understood by some people in the North Caucasus to be a positive aspect for the region. In the context of the study area, it seems the formulating a strong sense of place, along

with an understanding that sense of place is supposed to be specific to the various ethno-federal territories, as breaking with local sets of cultural norms can be seen as negative.

Finally, apparent protection and promotion of religious rights and practices was also noted as important positive outcomes of ethno-federalism, which were mentioned in the interviews particularly by Muslim participants. When republics are designed for and controlled by titular nationalities, groups that also happen to be Muslim, then such a republic could have laws and rights provided in its republic constitution that cater to expectations and social norms that a majority Muslim population would find acceptable. Islam is also reflected aesthetically in architecture, local art, and building facades, without any based criticism from Christian populations. Additionally, in a multi-national relations sense, Islam can be used as a basis for problem solving, as potential conflicts among traditionally Islamic nationalities can be worked out in a mutually acceptable manner, based in the Koran and mutual respect for Islamic traditions and principles.

While participants offered many positive comments about ethno-federalism, they tended to be more vocal in their interviews when suggesting potential negative outcomes related to ethno-federalism as a territorial strategy, as 20 passages from the interviews indicate. First and foremost, several participants said that they viewed ethno-federalism as an outdated way to territorialize the Russian Federation. While ethno-federalism had its time and place as an integral part of the Soviet system, the participants felt that dividing territories based on nationality was no longer necessary to maintain stability, and only worked to further separate citizens of Russia. While institutionalized ways to promote non-Russian cultures as 'in place' in the territories does create a more defined sense of behavior and identity, allowing them special status ultimately ends up in promoting nationalism, and encouraging members of republic titular

groups to stay in the republics, as opposed to taking advantage of better economic opportunities outside, as non-Russians face greater degrees of discrimination. In addition, having republics also gives Russian nationalists a basis to argue why non-Russians do not belong in ethnic Russian majority *kray*s and *oblast*s, pointing to their republics as where the titular groups belong. Separating non-Russians via semi-autonomous territories also works to affirm the majority status of ethnic Russians in *kray*s and *oblast*s, fostering a sense that non-Russians constitute an 'other,' not in place in ethnic Russian territories.

Several participants were quick to point out that ethno-federalism is ultimately synonymous with inequality. The fact that certain titular groups are favored over others, in an official sense, means that favoritism is a potential reality in any provincial scale territory, but particularly in the republics. Territorial and political autonomy means that republics are free to establish localized structures of political and economic power, which according to participants, are typically based on ethnic networks. These ethnically-based hierarchies of power work to exclude minority nationalities, thus creating an unfair class system and sometimes encouraging minorities to leave. In the case of the North Caucasus, participants suggested that disadvantaged minority groups tend to move into Stavropol *Kray* from the republics, if economically feasible, as these groups lack economic opportunity as outsiders in the republics. Participants also noted that since these power structures ultimately end up working in their own interests, they tend not to look beyond the republic scale for trade and development, other than to receive federal subsidies from Moscow/Federal Center. Therefore, a major perceived negative outcome of ethno-federalism for the North Caucasus, is an overall lack of economic progress and cooperation, partly due to republics tendency to remain isolated.

In additional to ethno-federalism, federal district reform is another policy utilized by the Russian government, possibly to achieve various territorial objectives. Fourteen participants commented on their own perceived reasoning and potential outcomes of federal district reform, all of which pertained to the creation of the North Caucasus Federal District in 2010. However, the responses were divided as to whether or not the outcomes potentially associated with federal district reform would ultimately be positive or negative, as 7 passages suggested positive outcomes and 7 pointed out negative outcomes.

First, the major positive outcome of federal district reform in the interviews was the fact that Stavropol and Stavropol *Kray* were becoming more diverse and multi-cultural. While participants could arguably have pointed to positive or negative aspects of Stavropol's increasing diversity, only one participant saw this trend as overtly negative. Participants suggested that formalizing the idea of the North Caucasus through the establishment of the NCFD has led to greater opportunities for education and economic success for residents of the republics, as students and young people from the republics now consider universities and colleges in Stavropol to be more accessible.

The other main positive outcome of federal district reform, cited by multiple participants, was that the North Caucasus was ultimately better off in terms of security as a formalized region. Stavropol *Kray*, as the only majority Russian territory, now constitutes an official ethnic Russian presence in the North Caucasus, whereas before the NCFD, the idea of "North Caucasus" was likely to be associated with non-Russian groups. Also, having all of the North Caucasus republics under a common sub-federal jurisdiction, with the arguable exception of Adygea, means that the federal center would theoretically be able to maintain order over the region should conflicts arise.

While a more streamlined channel to Moscow was cited as a positive aspect for overall security and conflict prevention, several participants also cited this situation as a negative for the North Caucasus in terms of potential economic development. Participants suggested that the official separation of the North Caucasus Federal district from Krasnodar and Sochi could ultimately be a negative factor in the NCFD's ability to secure foreign investment for building new tourism infrastructure, or other potential high end industries currently operating in the region, such as solar panel technology or satellite technology. In an economic sense, participants tended to see federal district reform as making all of the various NCFD territories ultimately more reliant of subsidies from Moscow, rather than promoting organic economic growth.

Participants from Stavropol were also critical of federal district reform for a few reasons. First, they tended to see separation from Krasnodar *Kray* and Rostov *Oblast* as negative for the agricultural industry predominantly found in Northern and Eastern Stavropol *Kray*. Similar to the argument for tourism in the republics, participants feared that being part of the NCFD would work as a detractor for investment in agriculture, and that foreign and domestic capital which could have ended up in Stavropol *Kray*, would ultimately go to Krasnodar *Kray* or Rostov *Oblast*, two territories which are not separated as competitors as part of the Southern Federal District. Stavropol itself was also suggested to be harmed by the selection of Pyatigorsk as the NCFD capital, as the city is not ultimately subservient to another, smaller city within its own *kray*.

Theory-Based Construct: Structure of Social Expectations

I coded for structure of social expectations across the study's dependent variables by isolating passages for the interviews that included references to social obligations responsibilities, rules, codes of behavior, institutions, social norms, duty to others or some type

of collective entity. In total, 14.2 percent of the inter passages related to structures of social expectations, as understood in connection to the study's dependent variable identity markers.

Table 7.7 – Coding Scheme for Structure of Social Expectations

ID #	Sentences/Fragments	Percentage	Identity Marker/Construct (Dependent Variable) Referenced in Structure of Social Expectations
V003	6/2	11.3	Nationality; Religion; North Caucasus
V004	8/3	16.1	*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic; Nationality; Citizenship
V005	9/0	11.1	*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic; Nationality; North Caucasus
V006	7/0	13.2	Nationality; City/Village/*Aul*
V007	3/1	25	Russian Federation; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic; Nationality
V008	3/0	11	Nationality
V009	2/1	17.6	Citizenship; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic
V010	4/1	22.7	Nationality; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic
V011	5/0	26.3	Nationality; North Caucasus
V012	2/0	18.2	North Caucasus
V013	3/1	14.8	North Caucasus; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic
V014	3/0	10.3	Nationality; Religion
V015	2/1	12	Russian Federation
V016	3/1	25	*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic; City/Village/*Aul*
V017	2/0	11.1	Russian Federation; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic
V018	3/1	18.2	City/Village/*Aul*; Nationality
V019	2/0	8.3	*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic
V020	4/0	16	Russian Federation; Nationality
V021	4/1	6.5	Religion; North Caucasus; City/Village/*Aul*
V022	5/0	9.3	South of Russia; North Caucasus; City/Village/*Aul*
V023	4/2	11.5	Language; Religion
V024	5/2	11.9	Nationality; North Caucasus; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic
V025	6/0	10.1	Russian Federation; Citizenship; Religion
V027	4/0	6.7	Language; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic
V028	7/0	8.8	Religion; Nationality; language
V029	10/2	16.4	Religion; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic; Nationality
V030	3/2	11.6	Nationality; City/Village/*Aul*; Religion
V031	4/0	8.2	*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic; Nationality
V033	3/1	26.7	Nationality; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic

V034	5/2	20	Russian Federation; City/Village/*Aul*; South of Russia; North Caucasus
V035	6/0	8.9	Language; South of Russia; *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic
V036	5/0	8.8	Nationality; Language; North Caucasus
V037	3/1	8	Nationality
V038	1/1	15.4	Nationality
V039	6/2	20	Russian Federation; Nationality
V040	2/0	13.3	Nationality

With 22 interviews associating social expectations to "Nationality," this construct was the overall most commonly discussed identity marker in terms of social expectations. Most of the comments referencing structure of social expectations pegged to nationality dealt with the perception that national groups in Russia are defined according to official standards, and thus group members undergo at least some degree of interaction and shared social experience with other members of their national groups, based on these standards.

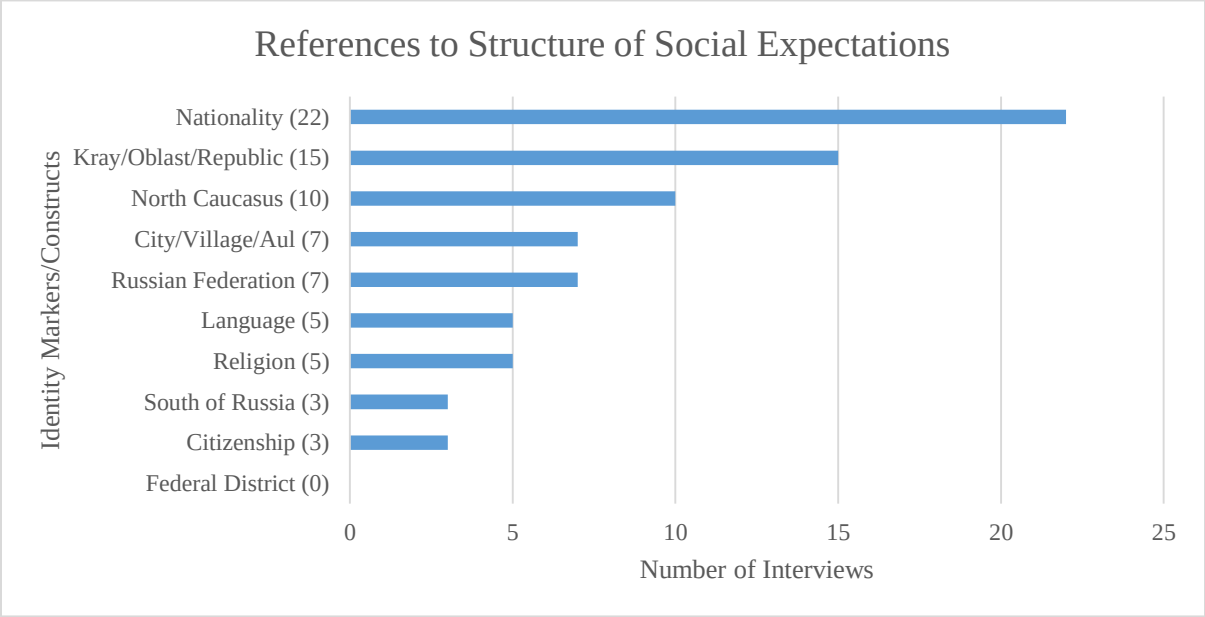

Figure 7.5 – References to Structure of Social Expectations

While participants who discussed the social expectations of nationality were in agreement that groups were expected to behave in certain ways, based on their national origin, most

participants also commented that ethnic Russians also had social expectations, and in many cases, all other groups were often grouped together simply as non-Russians. This binary division was pointed out by participants of all nationalities. Some participants also noted that non-Russians were expected to face discrimination, regardless of their particular nationality. Participants suggested that certain professions carried expectations based on nationality, and that social mobility overall was perhaps easier for ethnic Russians than it was for non-Russians. They cited examples of jobs in education and finance generally as more easily attainable by ethnic Russians. Conversely, titular nationalities in the republics also were expected to have advantages for social mobility and career advancement based on national status, particularly appointed positions in local governments.

Ethnic Russians in the North Caucasus were also cited as expected to maintain Russian national standards, just as ethnic Russians would do in any part of Russia. On the other hand, several non-Russian participants noted that non-Russians were more likely to be Russified, and are ultimately expected to behave like ethnic Russians, when not in concentration with members of their own national groups. Participants seemed to be in agreement that all people in Russia are confronted with the concept of nationality, and expected to behave according to national standards (stereotypes) at some point, even if only to a menial degree. However, several participants noted that they believed people were expected to show off their national identities socially (with bright cultural expressions) in the North Caucasus, perhaps to a greater degree than people in other regions of Russia.

The dependent variable with the next most coded passages pertaining to social expectations was *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic, with 15. Participants discussed both Stavropol *Kray* and various republics in terms of these territories social environments, as well as social tenancies

and overall expectations involving social decisions and interactions. Overall, Stavropol *Kray* received the most attention, with most of the participants pointing out its official status as a majority ethnic Russian territory, while at the same time also being the most ethnically diverse territory in the North Caucasus region. For example, one participant pointed out that Stavropol is the only territory in the North Caucasus federal district to operate solely under the constitution of the Russian Federation and not under an additional republic constitution. Nonetheless, there seemed to be a consensus that Stavropol *Kray* was expected to be accessible to all of the North Caucasus nationalities, and that the business climate and economic opportunities are understood as being more fair, objective and available than in the republics.

In addition to Stavropol, participants also discussed social expectations associated with Karachay-Cherkessia, Dagestan, Chechnya, and North Ossetia. In each case, participants commented on the importance of local networks and power structures, mostly based on ethnic alliances, for social mobility and success. Two participants noted that such connections are expected to be more indicative of one's success in the republics than one's overall education, talents, or abilities. The republics' populations are also expected to respect the cultural traditions of the titular groups in these territories, just as people are expected to refer to ethnic Russian cultural traditions in Stavropol *Kray*.

Three participants cited specific social expectations for Karachay-Cherkessia. First they said that expectations for violence in Karachay-Cherkessia, in their experience, were often held by friends and acquaintances in Stavropol *Kray*, suggesting that outsiders expected Karachay-Cherkessia to be dangerous. They also pointed out that Karachay-Cherkessia is expected to develop its tourism industry, based on marketing information pertaining to the republic, and the

belief that federal subsidies for tourism development are available more so for businesses operating in the tourism industry than for any other industry.

Ten participants explained social expectations that related to the "North Caucasus" in their interviews. A common theme among all of these interviews had to do with social expectations involving the overall demeanor of the region's population. In general, participants stated that people in the North Caucasus are expected to act in a more hot-tempered way, or be generally ruder than people in other regions of Russia. Another common theme was that social divisions based on nationality are expected in the North Caucasus, again as opposed to regions outside, for example in Saint Petersburg and Northern Russia. Four participants also commented on how young people especially have bad expectations in regard to their career opportunities in the North Caucasus, as they believe investors and businesses in other regions of Russia see the North Caucasus as a negative environment, and thus are less likely to do business in the North Caucasus than in other parts of the country, such as Krasnodar or other territories in the Southern Federal District.

When I coded for social expectations regarding "City/Village/*Aul*," about which seven participants commented specifically, I noticed some of the same themes that had been mentioned at the *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic scale. A common theme, mentioned in all seven interviews, dealt with the social expectation of ethnic tolerance for Stavropol. The city of Stavropol, as a center of development and higher learning, is expected to be not only diverse, but culturally tolerant and accessible to all the people of the North Caucasus. Non-Russian participants in particular voiced the expectation that Stavropol and its population are expected to exude greater degrees of cultural tolerance than people in cities like Cherkessk, Nalchik, or Grozny. According to three

participants, businesses and institutions in Stavropol are also expected to be more open and objective than those in cities.

Seven interviews also covered social expectations pertaining to the scale of "Russian Federation." First, several interviews noted that ethnic Russian culture was usually regarded as the standard set of cultural understandings for the country overall, although since the country is officially multi-national, every person should expect to practice, access, or at least be aware of his or her national traditions. In other words, everyone in Russia is expected to have an understanding of ethnic Russian culture, along with his or own national culture, if one comes from a non-Russian group. Ethno-federalism thus defines sets of national expectations for the country, and the titular cultures in Russian's various territories set up and determine the cultural norms and expectations in those territories. For example, Stavropol, as a Russian community, should maintain the same cultural expectations of other *kray*s and *oblast*s, as part of an "imagined community" of ethnic Russian territories.

Three participants suggested that as a multi-national country, the Russian Federation should expect to deal with issues that cultural diversity presents. The two major issues brought up in these interviews were social and economic inequality, and conflict/instability. The participants noted that the Russian state should set and hold standards for all of its citizens, namely in education and fairness for its labor markets. Although such expectations are idealized, the reality is that Russia's various territories are not all operating with even standards, and the expectation is that the Russian Federation will work toward policy and legal frameworks that promote the notions equality and economic development for all of its territories.

Five participants touched on social expectations centered on "language" in their interviews, the major theme being that people in Russia are expected to know at least some of

their national languages. Two participants went as far as to say that knowledge of their native language, Nogay, was considered vital for cultural authenticity, and that the expectation of being able to speak Nogay was in fact akin to being Nogay. The other major expectation, mentioned in all five interviews, was the status of the Russian language as the *lingua franca* of the country, and while usage of Russian may be optional in some cases in the North Caucasus, everyone in Russia is expected to study Russian in school and at least have a working knowledge of the language.

As was the case with "Language," five participants also spoke about social expectations in connection to "Religion." Interviews brought up expectations for the North Caucasus' two major religions, Islam and Christianity, but in the case of both, participants often noted that people in the North Caucasus are expected to associate with one or the other regardless of whether or not they are believers or actually practice it. For Islam in particular, participants were generally in agreement that Muslims are expected to practice their religion, or at least be in touch with it, to a greater degree than are Christians. A theme present in three of the interviews was the role of young people in Muslim groups, which, according to participants, are expected to reconnect with Islam after previous generations lost a sense of what it meant to be a Muslim in Soviet times.

Expectations for religion which related to the overall idea of ethno-federalism were also present in the interviews. Titular status was mentioned as a deciding factor as to whether certain religious infrastructure would be present or not. For example, Muslims living in Stavropol, and ethnic Russian territory, cannot expect to have a mosque readily available for prayers and celebrations.

There were also several examples of religious expectations specifically related to "Nationality." Two Nogay participants and one Karachay participant specifically mentioned that members of their national groups were expected to celebrate three major Islamic holidays, and were expected to find and attend a mosque for those celebrations and services if possible. Four participants also commented on expectations of religious groups that extend national divisions, for example, Muslims are expected to find common ground to settle arguments and disputes. Additionally, two participants suggested that Russians are expected to respect Armenians as Christians, thus leading to favoritism of Armenians over other non-Russian groups.

Similar to the comments on social expectations in the North Caucasus, participants tended to focus on the populations overall expected demeanor in regard to social expectations in the "South of Russia." Three participants focused on the South of Russia in their interviews, all of which described Southern people as generally relaxed, and less focused on work than people in Northern and Central Russia. Also, participants commented on expectations for the general pace of life, which they described as slower in the South of Russia than in other regions. These differences in general attitude were also brought up as a potential deterrent for economic development, as outsiders may choose to avoid working in the South, based on its populations' perceived lazy attitude and lack of work ethic.

Finally, three interviews focused on social expectations specifically related to the concept of "Citizenship." These participants suggested some interesting expectations regarding various age groups in Russian society. First, they spoke about changing expectations of citizenship from the Soviet Union to the Russian Federation, noting that older people in the North Caucasus, and in Stavropol *Kray* in particular, sometimes expected the younger generation to view citizenship and civic duties in a more Soviet style mindset. For example, citizenship in Stavropol carries

with it the expectation of national tolerance, however, younger people are held more accountable to maintain this attitude and to socialize more across ethnic lines. Also, while all three participants mentioned the fact that all citizens of Russia were expected to be accountable to the legal system of the country, two participants suggested that citizens in the ethnic Russian majority territories, like Stavropol *Kray*, were expected to fall in line with Moscow, and the rest of the country, to a greater degree than citizens of the republics, who live under semi-autonomous rule.

Theory-Based Construct: Affect and Feelings

To code for affect and feelings, I isolated passages that referenced various emotional expressions to places (sorrow, happiness, pride, hate, etc.). I then categorized the emotional references into positive or negative and recorded the places referenced. I then organized the results into four scales, state/federal, regions, *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic, and City/Village/*Aul*, to analyze whether or not participants chose to associate positive or negative emotions at some scales more than others. In total 16.3 percent of the total passages contained passages that expressed affectual or emotional context when speaking about places.

Table 7.8 – Coding Scheme for Affect and Feelings

ID #	Sentences/Fragments	Percentage	Places Referenced with Positive Emotional Response	Places Reference with Negative Emotional Response
V003	5/0	7	Russian Federation; Southern Federal District; Stavropol *Kray*	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Republics
V004	8/1	13.2	Stavropol *Kray*; Stavropol; South of Russia; North Ossetia	North Caucasus; Dagestan; Chechnya; North Caucasus Federal District; Karachay-Cherkessia
V005	4/1	6.2	Russian Federation; Dagestan; Mahachkala;	Central Russia; Astrakhan

			Birbash; Mekigi; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*	
V006	3/0	5.7	Russian Federation; Ukraine; Armenia; Stavropol	
V007	2/1	18.8		North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*
V008	3/1	14.8		South of Russia; North Caucasus; Chechnya
V009	3/0	17.6	Russian Federation; Stavropol; North Caucasus	
V010	4/0	18.2	Stavropol *Kray*	North Caucasus Republics; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*
V011	2/0	29.6	Stavropol *Kray*; Russian Federation; North Caucasus	North Caucasus
V012	2/0	17.2		North Caucasus; Stavropol
V013		12	Saint Petersburg	North Caucasus; Stavropol; North Caucasus Federal District
V014	6/2	18.9	North Caucasus; Dagestan; Chechnya; Stavropol; Pyatigorsk; North Caucasus Federal District	North Caucasus
V015	4/1	27.8	Russian Federation; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*; Stavropol	
V016	3/0	18.2	North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*	
V017	2/1	12.5	North Caucasus; Stavropol	Stavropol *Kray*
V018	5/0	24	Russian Federation; Stavropol; Armenia; Baku	Nagorno-Karabakh

V019	4/0	6.5	Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*	North Caucasus
V020	3/0	5.6	Stavropol; Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus; Moscow	
V021	4/2	9.6	Russian Federation; Moscow; Stavropol; the South of Russia; Mahachkala; Karachay-Cherkessia; Central Russia	North Caucasus; Georgia; Dagestan
V022	4/1	11.9	South of Russia; North Caucasus; Moscow; Stavropol *Kray*	North Caucasus
V023	3/0	10.2	Russian Federation; Moscow; the South of Russia; Stavropol	North Caucasus
V024	3/2	8.3	Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*	North Caucasus; the South of Russia
V025	5/2	8.8	Karachaevsk; Stavropol *Kray*; North Caucasus; West Caucasus; Dombay	Sochi
V027	6/0	10.9	Russian Federation; Karachay-Cherkessia; North Caucasus	Stavropol; Sochi
V028	5/0	16.3	Russian Federation; Karachay-Cherkessia; North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*	Azerbaijan; Moscow
V029	7/0	12.2	Stavropol; Karachay-Cherkessia; Stavropol *Kray*; Russian Federation; Vladikavkaz	South of Russia; Moscow; North Caucasus
V030	6/2	60	Stavropol; Rostov; Krasnodar; Pyatigorsk; Azerbaijan; Nagorno-Karabakh Georgia; Stavropol *Kray*	Pyatigorsk; North Caucasus
V031	5/2	20	Russian Federation; Armenia; Stavropol; Krasnodar; Rostov	Baku, Nagorno-Karabakh; North Caucasus Federal

				District; Stavropol *Kray*
V033	6/0	8.9	North Caucasus; Stavropol	North Caucasus Federal District; Moscow; Grozny; Makhachkala
V034	7/2	10.5	North Caucasus; Stavropol *Kray*; Krasnodar *Kray*; Southern Federal District; Stavropol	North Caucasus Federal District; Pyatigorsk
V035	7/0	4	South of Russia; Russian Federation; Ukraine; Stavropol *Kray*	North Caucasus Federal District
V036	4/2	46.1	Russian Federation; Southern Russia; North Caucasus; Chechnya; Pyatigorsk	Stavropol
V037	5/1	12.5	Russian Federation; Stavropol *Kray*; Stavropol	South of Russia; North Caucasus; Southern Federal District; Chechnya
V038	2/0	10.1	Stavropol; North Caucasus	
V039	4/1	12.5	Russian Federation; Stavropol; Ukraine	L’viv; North Caucasus
V040	5/0	33.3	Russian Federation; Stavropol; Stavropol *Kray*	North Caucasus

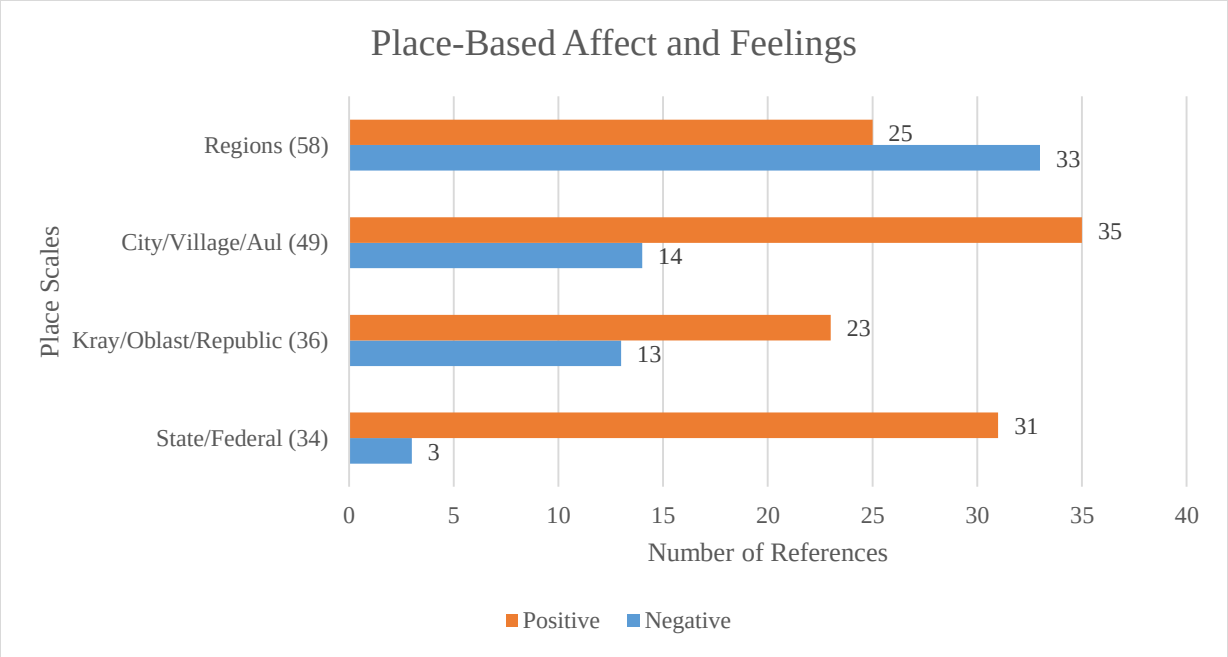

Figure 7.6 – Place-Based Affect and Feelings by Territorial Scale

When analyzing participants' general scope of usage of affect and emotion to describe places, I noted four basic categories which grouped places and territorial constructs into scalar groups. These classifications were "Regions," which included vernacular constructs, such as the North Caucasus, or formal constructs like the NCFD, "City/Villiage/*Aul*," which included any references to particular cities, or other defined urban settings, "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," which included all mentions of formally defined sub-federal Russian territories, and "State/Federal," which counted references to the Russian Federation, or other sovereign states. In total, I counted 177 passages that utilized affect or emotion to describe a place in the interviews.

Regions, as constructs, evoked both the most varied, and highest number of affectual and emotional responses from participants with a total of 58, 25 of which were positive and 33 of which were negative. Regional descriptions were the only scalar group about which participants offered more negative responses than positive. The most commonly mentioned territorial construct, coded as a region, was the "North Caucasus," with 14 positive passages and 19

negative passages. The "South of Russia" was the next most commonly mentioned region, with six positive references and four negative references. These results suggest that, although opinion varied regarding positivity or negativity based on emotion, the "North Caucasus" was clearly of greater importance. The "South of Russia," while not as commonly referenced, was seen in more positive light. In terms of formal regions (federal districts), participants overwhelmingly preferred to use negative emotions to describe the North Caucasus Federal District, as opposed to the Southern Federal District. The NCFD was described negatively in six passages, while only one participant referenced it positively, giving it the highest ratio of negative to positive response emotional response of any territorial construct mentioned in the interviews. The SFD was cited twice with positive emotional references, and once as negative.

References to places at the "City/Village/*Aul*" scale were the next most common, with 49 total references, 35 of them being positive and 14 being negative. Not surprisingly, Stavropol was mentioned with emotional response by more participants than any other city, with 17 positive passages versus only two negative ones. The next most commonly mentioned city, in terms of affect and emotion, was actually Moscow, about which I coded four passages as positive and three as negative. Next came Pyatigorsk, with two positive passages and two negative passages. Several other cities, villages and *aul*s were mentioned by single participants. The top three cities mentioned with emotion and affect were all politically important, severing as scalar capitols in the Russian Federal system, with Stavropol as the capitol city of Stavropol *Kray*, Moscow as the capital of the Russian Federation, and Pyatigorsk as the capital of the NCFD.

*Kray*s, *oblast*s, and republics were mentioned with affection and/or emotion in 36 total passages, 35 of which were positive and 14 negative. Stavropol *Kray* led the way with 23

passages, 17 showing positive affect and emotion and 6 negative. Karachay-Cherkessia and Chechnya were next with five total passages for each republic. Karachay-Cherkessia had four positive passages and one negative. Participants described Chechnya negatively in three passages and positively in two. Two participants also made general references to North Caucasus republics, both of which were negative, and Krasnodar Kay appeared with one positive passage. The results from the City/Village/*Aul* scale suggest that Stavropol, a *Kray*, was understood in a more emotionally positive manner than the other the various republics in the North Caucasus region.

Finally, territorial constructs at the State/Federal scale was the least likely to be mentioned, as a group, but participants showed the clearest pattern of positivity and negativity at this scale. In total, emotional and/or affectual references to Russia and other sovereign states appeared 34 times throughout the interviews, and 31 of these references were positive, as opposed to only three negative. The clearest trend at this scale was participants' overwhelmingly positive emotional response to the Russian Federation, as I coded 19 positive passages, without a single negative emotional passage. Armenia and Ukraine were mentioned three times, all of which were positive. Georgia and Azerbaijan each had two references, one positive and one negative in the case of each of the South Caucasus states. The overall positive affectual and emotional statements to countries, compared to the more negative trend for regions, shows that participants preferred to engage with the more focused regional scale as a context for expressing discontents and identifying problems, while the positive state/federal scale tended to be seen more in terms of an ideal, or provider of solutions.

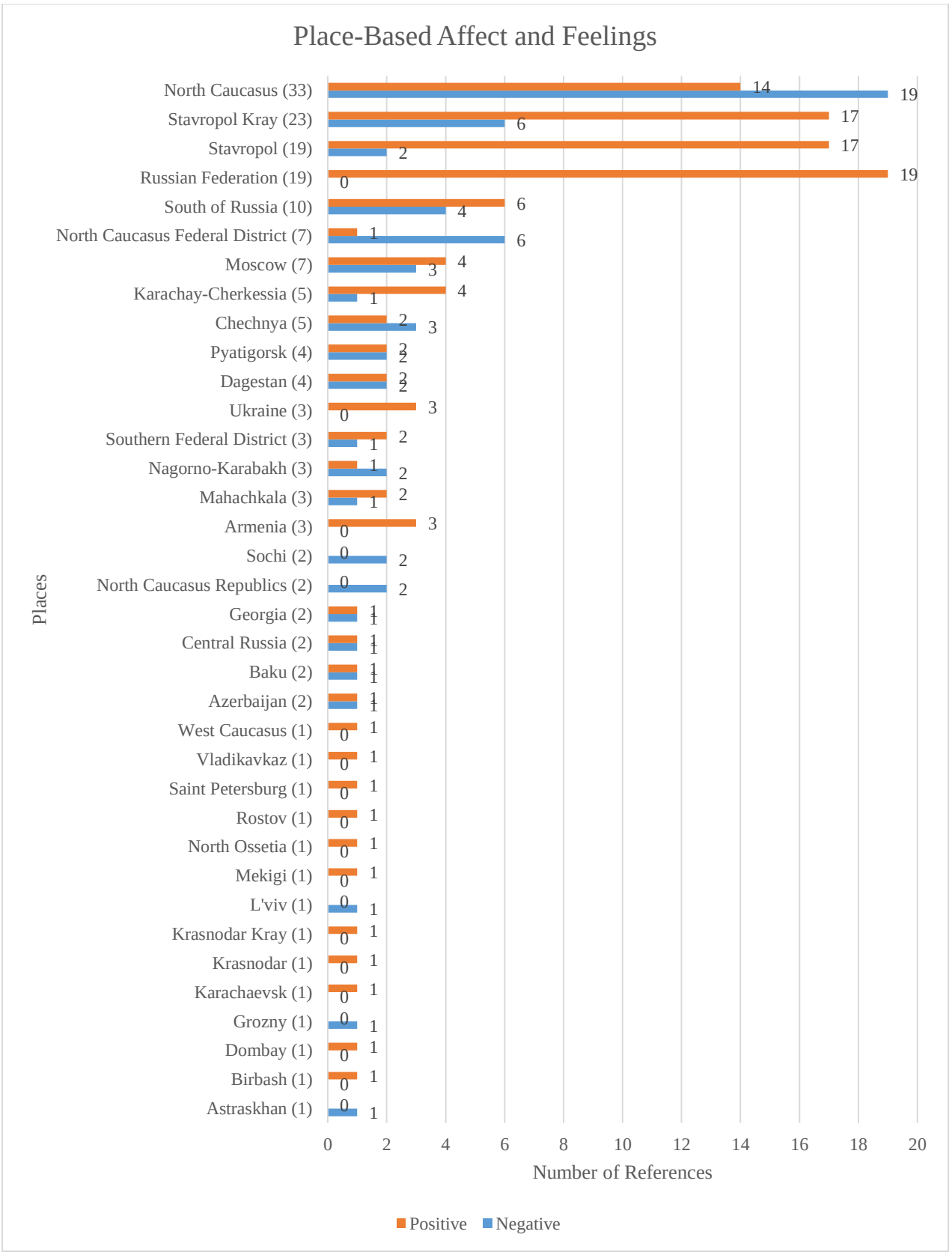

Figure 7.7 – Places Coded for Affect and Feelings

Theory-Based Construct: Civic Identity (*Rossijski*)/Citizenship

I coded for the construct of Russian Citizenship, or a sense of civic identity *(Rossijski*) by isolating and analyzing passages that included participants' references to participation, belonging, or attachment to the Russian state via economic, legal, social and/or political identification. A total of 21 participants spoke specifically about citizenship or civic identity in their interviews, and I noticed that three main themes appeared to be present in many of them: Russian Citizenship as a personal factor for one's identity, citizenship as an important factor for Russia's legal framework, and citizenship as a mechanism for social or territorial control. Although the participants who commented on citizenship strongly stated the importance of citizenship, only 3.7 percent of the total interview passages dealt directly with issues related to citizenship in the Russian Federation.

Table 7.9 – Coding Scheme for Civic Identity/Citizenship

ID #	Sentences/ Fragments	Percentage	Thematic Identification with Citizenship/Civic Identity
V003	6/0	8.5	Russian citizenship as an identity factor; Citizenship as important for Russia's legal framework; Citizenship as a mechanism for territorial control
V004	4/0	5.9	Citizenship as a mechanism for territorial control; Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V005	2/0	2.5	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V006	1/0	1.9	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V009	2/0	11.8	Citizenship as important for Russia's legal framework
V011	1/0	5.3	Citizenship as a mechanism for social or territorial control
V012	1/0	9.1	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V016	1/0	6.25	Russian citizenship as an identity factor; Citizenship as important for Russia's legal framework
V018	2/0	9.1	Citizenship as important for Russia's legal framework
V019	1/0	4.1	Citizenship as a mechanism for social or territorial control
V021	3/0	3.9	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V022	2/0	3.7	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V024	3/2	9.6	Russian citizenship as an identity factor; Citizenship as important for Russia's legal framework; Citizenship as a mechanism for social or territorial control

V025	3/0	5.1	Russian citizenship as an identity factor; Citizenship as a mechanism for social or territorial control
V027	4/0	6.8	Russian citizenship as an identity factor; Citizenship as a mechanism for social or territorial control
V028	2/1	5	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V031	2/0	4.7	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V033	2/1	20	Citizenship as important for Russia's legal framework; Citizenship as a mechanism for social or territorial control
V035	1/0	1.5	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V036	1/1	3.5	Russian citizenship as an identity factor
V037	3/0	6	Citizenship as a mechanism for social or territorial control

The most popular overall theme I found after coding for "Civic Identity/Citizenship" dealt with this construct specifically as an identity factor for participants. In total 16 out of the 21 interviews coded for "Civic Identity/Citizenship" had passages that directly with civic identity. Six participants specifically commented on the fact that they believed citizenship to be the foundation of identity in Russia, with most citing the fact that citizenship, thus civic identity, is firmly defined, while other elements of identity, like nationality for example, are more fluid and vary in their meaning among different populations. Themes of homeland and scale were also present. Four participants commented on the notion of the Russian Federation, as a scalar entity, was the easiest territorial factor for people to understand, as it represents the highest sense of authority over them. Several also commented on the fact that the idea of Russia as homeland was important to them, and that being born into the Russian Federation was important to their own personal sense of self.

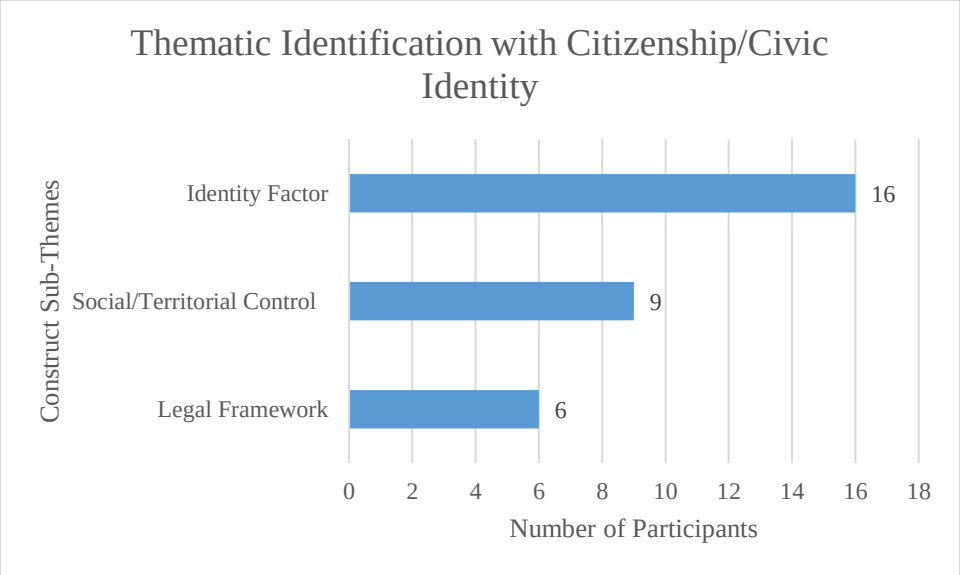

Figure 7.8 – Major Themes Coded for Citizenship/Civic Identity

Nine participants' interviews included passages on the theme of citizenship as a mechanism for either social, or territorial control in Russia. Five participants mentioned scalar relations in Russia's federal structure, and noted that while Russian citizenship applies to everyone in the Russian Federation, not all citizens are equal, referring to residents of autonomous republics. They mainly spoke about federal control over the North Caucasus republics, and the importance of having a vertical system of power to prevent corruption in sub-federal territories. These comments applied to titular groups in particular, as members of these groups could have special status in republics that they would not have as residents of *kray*s or *oblast*s. However, the other four participants who spoke on this sub-theme noted that Russian citizenship did constitute a measure of equal rights for citizens everywhere in the country, with one participant noting that Russian citizenship is possible more important for non-Russians than for ethnic Russians, as citizenship guarantees members of these group a collective stake in the country.

Finally, six participants commented on the importance of citizenship for Russia's legal framework. They noted that Russia's legal system is ultimately based on the constitution of the Russian Federation, which applies to all Russian citizens, and suggested the importance of thinking about the laws of Russia as applicable anywhere in the state, thus creating an expectation that citizens of Russia can live a similar life, at least in a legal sense, anywhere in the Russian Federation. Four participants also commented on the legal rights provided to national groups in Russia, suggesting that Russian citizenship, by definition, is an inclusive construct. They also suggested that cultural diversity is both guaranteed and promoted vis-à-vis the country's legal structure, and therefore should be understood as part of what it means to be a citizen of Russia.

Theory-Based Construct: Ethno-National Identity/Nationality (*Nationalnost*)

When coding based on the construct of ethno-national identity, I isolated participants' references to language, ancestry, religion and peoplehood, or any other elements related to ethnic or national senses of belonging. I then grouped the responses based on eight common sub-themes, applicable to ethno-national identity as a construct, which emerged as major points and commonly discussed elements in the interviews. These sub-themes were social mobility, national traditions, language, sense of community, religious beliefs, political power/alliances, perceptions and stereotypes, and shared history. In total 14.8 percent of all interview passages dealt directly with ethno-national identity and were applicable to at least one of the eight aforementioned sub-themes.

Table 7.10 – Coding Scheme for Ethno-National Identity

ID #	Percent	Sentences/Fragments	Ethno-National Sub-Themes Discussed
V003	8.4	4/2	Religious beliefs; national traditions; language
V004	16.2	9/2	Language; Religious Beliefs; Shared History; National Traditions
V005	11.1	7/2	Language; Religious Beliefs; National Traditions; Sense of Community
V006	18.9	7/3	Language; Religious Beliefs; Political Power/Alliances
V007	18.8	3/0	National Traditions
V008	29.6	6/2	National Traditions
V009	29.4	5/0	Shared History; Sense of Community; Language
V010	13.6	2/1	National Traditions
V011	15.8	3/0	Shared History
V012	27.3	2/1	Political Power/Alliances
V013	11.1	3/0	Perceptions and Stereotypes
V014	20.7	5/1	Sense of Community; Political Power/Alliances
V015	20	4/1	Social Mobility
V016	18.8	2/1	Social Mobility
V017	11	2/0	Social Mobility
V018	13.6	2/1	Sense of Community; Social Mobility
V019	8.3	2/0	Social Mobility
V020	4	1/0	Sense of Community
V021	7.8	6/0	Political Power/Alliances
V022	11.1	4/2	Social Mobility; Sense of Community
V023	9.6	5/0	Religious Beliefs; Social Mobility
V024	8.5	4/1	Social Mobility; Political Power/Alliances
V025	11.9	7/0	Language; Religious Beliefs; National Traditions; Social Mobility
V027	5	3/0	Social Mobility
V028	12.5	8/2	Social Mobility; Language; Religious Beliefs; National Traditions
V029	15.1	9/2	Language; Religious Beliefs; Social Mobility; Perceptions and Stereotypes
V030	13.9	6/0	Language; Sense of Community; National Traditions
V031	8.2	4/0	Social Mobility; National Traditions
V033	26.7	3/1	National Traditions; Social Mobility
V034	17.1	4/2	National Traditions; Sense of Community
V035	8.9	6/0	Language; Social Mobility; Sense of Community; Perceptions and Stereotypes
V036	8.8	5/0	Religious Beliefs; National Traditions

V037	18	8/1	Social Mobility; Language; Political Power/Alliances; National Traditions
V038	23.1	3/0	Social Mobility; Perceptions Stereotypes
V039	17.5	5/2	Language; Social Mobility
V040	13.3	2/0	Social Mobility; Sense of Community

Of all the comments and passages about ethno-national identity from the interviews, the sub-theme that participants mentioned the most when talking about issues of nationality was how the construct applies to one's social mobility. In total 19 of the participants commented on this particular sub-theme in their interviews, and 12 of them indicated that the nationality as a concepts was important in contemporary Russia based on its significance for social mobility. Networking and job placement were mentioned by 10 participants, with their overall consensus being that hiring networks and job expectations can be influenced by one's national identity. These participants noted that in Stavropol, certain jobs, such as teachers, or bankers, tended to be done by ethnic Russians, and that non-Russians could possibly face discrimination in certain career fields. Conversely, in the republics, and increasingly in Stavropol *Kray*, business networks run by people who network based on their belonging to particular national groups often tend to hire and promote people of the same group. Therefore, one's nationality could potentially affect his or her social mobility in the North Caucasus, depending on his or her employment goals. Eight participants who commented on social mobility also noted that one's ethno-national identity would mostly likely be a secondary factor in his or her employability, behind his or her education and general behavior and manners.

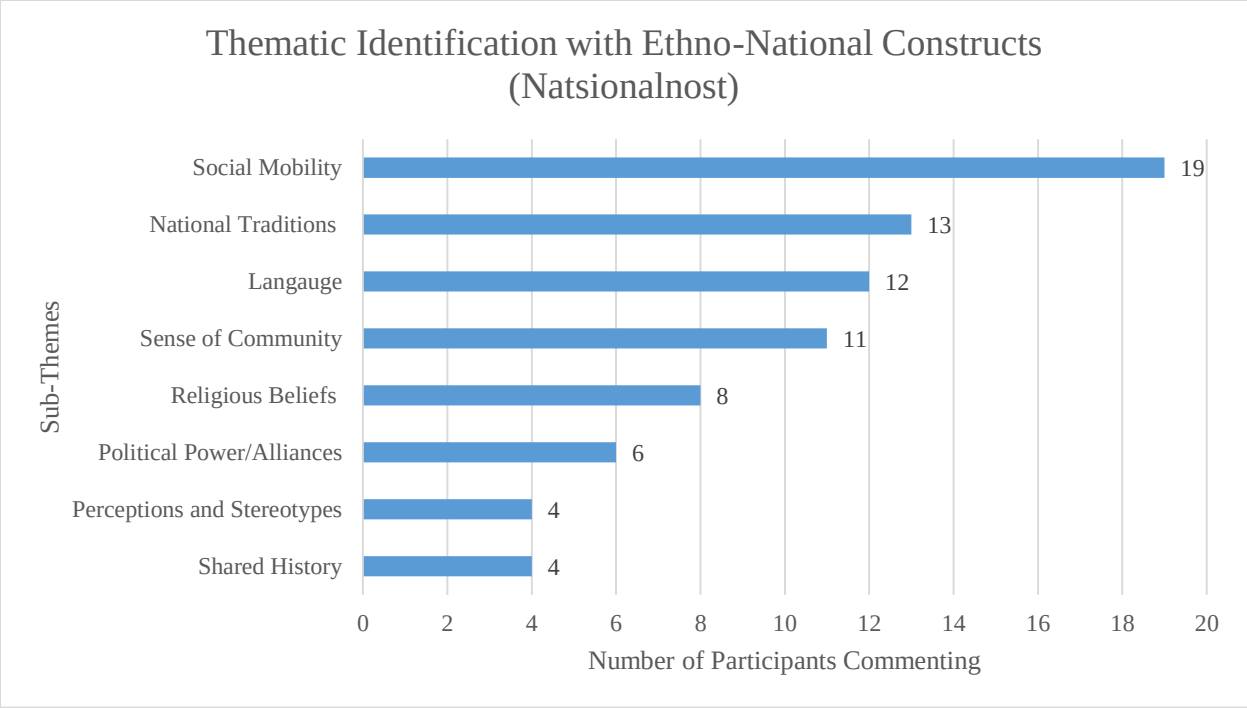

Figure 7.9 – Major Themes Coded in Regard to Ethno-National Identity

The next most commonly discussed sub-theme in relation to ethno-national identity was the practice of national traditions, about which 13 participants commented. Ten participants who mentioned national traditions also noted that they believed people tended to practice traditions to a greater degree in the North Caucasus than in other parts of Russia. These interviews suggested that people tended to show off their ethno-national cultures and allegiances in public, particularly younger people belonging to non-Russian groups. Demonstrations of traditions mentioned included dancing in public parks, gathering to cook traditional foods in the forest, or at parks, and playing loud music specific to one's ethnic group from cars. However, three participants also brought up the Cossacks, and compared their public displays of national traditions to those done by the non-Russian groups. Russian national traditions were also discussed, but they tended to be mentioned along with social norms or defaul*t* ways to behave. For example, four participants mentioned Russian foods, such as *borsht*, *okroshka* (a cold soup), or *kholotets*

(jellied meat) as usual fare for Russia, while likening foods such as *shashlik* (shish-kabobs) or *plov* (a rice dish) to non-Russian groups.

Another important aspect regarding national traditions, particularly among non-Russian participants, was the importance of practicing one's national traditions for reasons of cultural preservation. Eight participants commented on this idea, six non-Russians and two ethnic Russians. All of them noted that national traditions were being practiced less and less, and that few young people seemed to care about them as much as the older generations. Several participants suggested that as intraregional migration levels increase in the North Caucasus, and more and more non-Russians find themselves living in Stavropol *Kray*, separated from their greater ethno-national communities in the republics, that these individuals tend to lose touch with their traditions very quickly. The two Russian participants suggested that since the North Caucasus, and Stavropol *Kray* in particular, were becoming more culturally diverse, it was difficult to get a true sense of classical Russian culture there. One noted that Russians in Stavropol actually have a unique set of national traditions, which reflect transculturation between traditional Slavic elements and pieces of the cultures indigenous to the North Caucasus that Slavic people tend to find attractive such as food ways for example.

Twelve participants commented specifically on the importance of their native languages in the interviews. In each case, the basic idea was that speaking one's native language defines his or her potential audience for communication. Ten of these participants, including three ethnic Russians, discussed the increased importance of non-Russian native languages for identity. Because the Russian language is the *lingua franca* of the North Caucasus, and the defau*l*t language used in education and other institutions, non-Russians very often speak Russian at a native or near native level. Since ethnic Russians rarely have the need, or even the

opportunity to learn non-Russian languages, speaking such languages becomes a very clear method to include or exclude persons from one's social circle, or interaction. Three ethnic Russian participants commented on their disappointment in regard to the general sloppy usage of the Russian language, not only among non-Russians, but ethnic Russians as well, saying that they took pride in their native language, just as non-Russians would in their languages.

The next mostly commonly discussed sub-theme related to ethno-national identity was a sense of community that is supported and maintained by socialization with members of one's ethno-national group. Ideas relating to this sub-theme were fairly straight forward and consistent, with the basic trend being that people of same nationality tend to socialize with one another, and thus form bonds and social circles that work to reinforce their sense of ethno-national identity. A large factor in this sub-theme was family structure. Because family is generally considered to be important in the North Caucasus, especially among non-Russian groups, social activities often center around spending time with one's relatives and extended family for holidays and general recreation. Another major theme for non-Russian groups, which was particularly evident in the interviews of several Armenian and Nogay participants, was the importance of marrying someone of the same ethno-national group. Intermarriage works to widen one's social circle, but keep the scope within his or her ethno-national community and potentially strengthening his or her sense of ethno-national identity.

Religion and religious beliefs were discussed by eight participants in terms of ethno-national identity. These participants all mentioned the fact that religion and nationality are connected ideas in Russia and in the North Caucasus, and that people very rarely practice a religion other than commonly observed faith of their ethno-national groups. For example, the majority of ethnic Russian participants in the project identified themselves as Orthodox

Christian, and the rest as atheists or of no religion. No ethnic Russians self-identified as Muslims. Likewise, no Karacahys, Nogays, Dargins, Lezgins, etc., self-identified as Christians. Therefore, pegging nationality to a particular religion tends to influence one's social circle, as well as language and national traditions. Participants often noted that they practiced national traditions on religious holidays, especially Muslim participants.

Six participants discussed connections between ethno-national identity and political power and alliances. All of these interviews were contextualized in the North Caucasus, or specific republics. The general consensus was that when officials have the ability to appoint, or support people for other offices, they almost always do so according to the officials' own ethno-national group. All six participants cited examples from republics, including Dagestan, Karachay-Cherkessia, and North Ossetia. In the less diverse republics, like Karachay-Cherkessia, the two titular groups, Karachay and Cherkess were described as having a clear political advantage over other groups. In Dagestan, as much more ethnically diverse republic, participants described more localized political power structures based on ethno-national ties and sharp divisions with the republic-wide government. Additionally, three participants noted that they believed such power networks, centered particularly on non-Russian ethno-national groups, were becoming prominent in the local governments of Stavropol *Kray*. Two of them mentioned Dargin-based networks in Eastern Stavropol *Kray* specifically.

Four participants spoke specifically on the sub-theme of perceptions and stereotypes based on nationality in the North Caucasus, as well as wider Russia. Three of the interviewed featured comments centered on disproportionate representations of non-Russians by the media, in association with negative behavior, specifically crime. Two of the participants who spoke about stereotypes said that they believe they had been given an advantage, been disadvantaged,

or had been evaluated in a social context based solely on their perceived ethno-national identity. The other two said they believed that profiling based on ethno-national groups happened frequently in the North Caucasus, and that they expected to be profiled at some point in their lives.

Shared history of ethno-national groups was also a sub-theme addressed by four participants. These participants argued the importance of understanding nationalities in the North Caucasus in historical context because their histories are what make them authentic and distinct from other groups. One Russian participant argued that understanding ethnic Russian identity is only possible by looking at pre-Soviet histories, as what it originally meant to be ethnic Russian has been lost.

Theory-Based Construct: Region as Brand

To code for "Region as Brand," I isolated passages in which participants made references to characteristics that they viewed as being ascribed to the study area, or parts of the study area in a regional context. This construct is based on the work of Vainikka (2012), who suggests that state-sponsored discourses work to establish notions of economic identity, thus "branding" a region with a particular identity, which can be crucial for attracting foreign direct investment, or for establishing a specific role for a region in the overall context of the state. In the coding scheme, I classified regional context in terms of four constructs: North Caucasus, North Caucasus Federal District, South of Russia, and Southern Federal District. In total, I coded 19.9 percent of the total interview transcripts as applicable to "region as brand."

Table 7.11 – Coding Scheme for Region as Brand

ID #	Percentage	Sentences/Fragments	Regional Context Discussed
V003	12.7	7/2	North Caucasus
V004	11.8	8/0	South of Russia; North Caucasus; Southern Federal District; North Caucasus Federal District
V005	13.6	9/2	North Caucasus
V006	13.5	7/0	North Caucasus
V007	18.8	2/1	North Caucasus
V008	22.2	4/2	South of Russia; North Caucasus
V009	23.5	4/0	North Caucasus
V010	22.7	3/2	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District
V011	15.8	3/0	North Caucasus
V012	36.4	2/2	North Caucasus
V013	25.9	5/2	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District
V014	20.7	6/0	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District
V015	28	5/2	North Caucasus
V016	12.5	2/0	North Caucasus
V017	11.1	2/0	North Caucasus
V018	9.1	2/0	North Caucasus
V019	16.7	3/1	North Caucasus
V020	12	3/0	North Caucasus
V021	12.9	8/2	North Caucasus
V022	18.5	10/0	The South of Russia; North Caucasus
V023	17.3	7/2	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District; South of Russia;
V024	15.3	9/0	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District
V025	45.8		North Caucasus
V027	15	25/2	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District
V028	27.5	7/2	North Caucasus; South of Russia
V029	8.2	18/4	South of Russia; North Caucasus
V030	18.6	6/0	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District
V031	16.3	6/2	North Caucasus
V033	26.7	2/2	North Caucasus

V034	34.3	12/0	North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District;
V035	32.9	20/2	South of Russia; North Caucasus; North Caucasus Federal District
V036	10.5	6/0	North Caucasus
V037	16	8/0	North Caucasus; South of Russia; Southern Federal District; North Caucasus Federal District
V038	23.1	3/0	North Caucasus
V039	25	8/2	North Caucasus
V040	26.7	4/0	North Caucasus

As I expected, due to the nature of the question prompts utilized in the interviews, the North Caucasus, in a general or vernacular sense, was the most commonly discussed region with 31 participants commenting on it. Throughout the transcripts, there were 18 separate descriptors which appeared in multiple interviews, which participants used directly in relation to the North Caucasus. The most common way to describe the region was "multi-national," as 22 participants tended to note the ethnic and cultural diversity of the region in this fashion. The next most common descriptor was "unstable," with 14 interviews referencing the region's political instability. Twelve participants described the North Caucasus as "underdeveloped," suggesting that it lagged behind other regions of Russia in terms of its economic landscape and business/employment opportunities for its residents. On a related note, the next most common descriptor was "tourist destination," noting a major theme of regional development for the North Caucasus. Ten participants noted the "tough mentality" of North Caucasus residents, and eight described the region as "traditional." Seven participants described the North Caucasus as a "border land." Six participants noted that the North Caucasus is "resource rich."

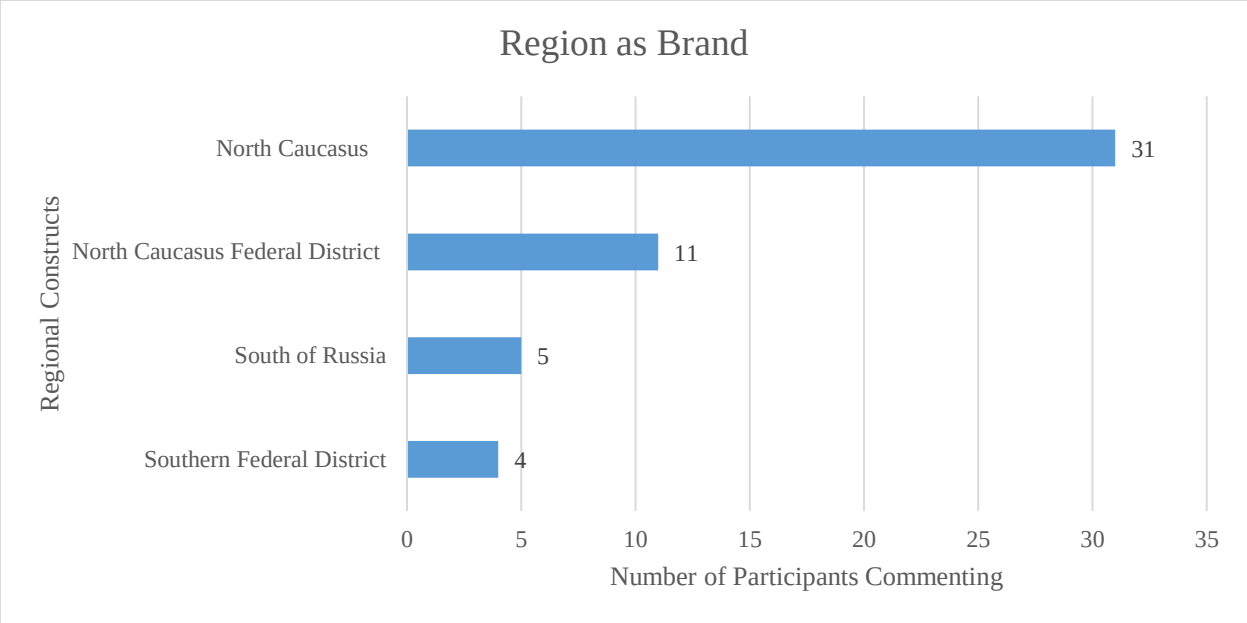

Figure 7.10 – Regional Constructs Coded According to Region as Brand

Several more descriptors were used to describe the North Caucasus region in five or fewer interviews. Five participants called the region "dangerous." "Beautiful" (in terms of nature) and "non-Slavic" were each used to describe the region four times. Participants referred to the population of the North Caucasus as "rude/ill-tempered" three times, and also described them as "dissatisfied" in three interviews. The region was also described three times as a "physical transition zone" between mountains and steppe lands. Finally, four descriptors appeared in two interviews a piece, including as a "cultural transition zone," as "nationalistic," as "materialistic," and as having "high economic potential."

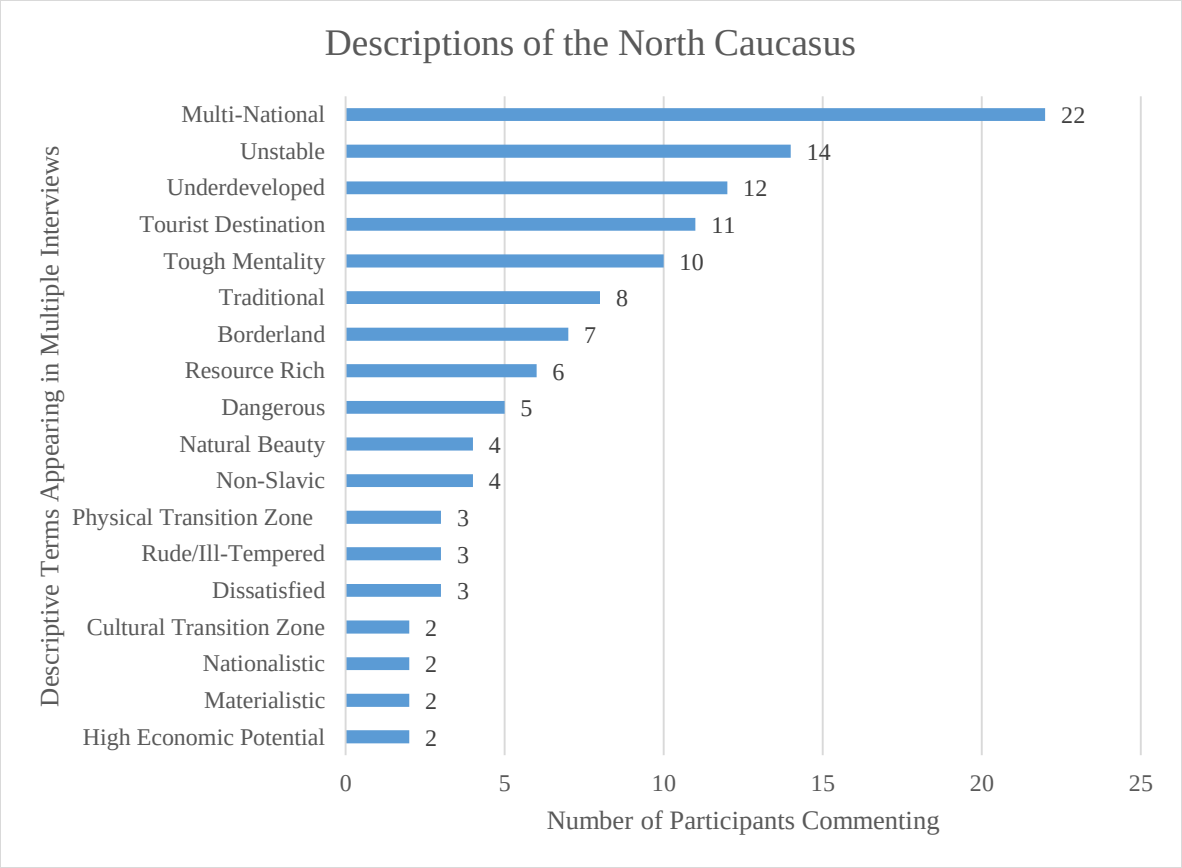

Figure 7.11 – Major Descriptions of the North Caucasus

The North Caucasus Federal District was discussed by 11 participants, noting seven descriptors multiple times. Although fewer chose to comment on this construct, several participants were eager to give their opinions on the NCFD and explain the logic, or lack of logic, behind its establishment, and the themes presented in the interviews do suggest that participants were aware of some of the stated intentions of the NCFD, notability in terms of economic strategy. Eight of the 11 participants described the NCFD as "unstable," as term that was also used to describe the North Caucasus in a vernacular sense. Seven described the NCFD as a "tourist destination," while six interviews also called it a region of "high economic potential." The theme of development continued for the NCFD, with five participants describing the forma region as "underdeveloped." Five participants called the NCFD "unnecessary," while

four participants simply noted it as "new." Finally, two participants described the NCFD as "under control."

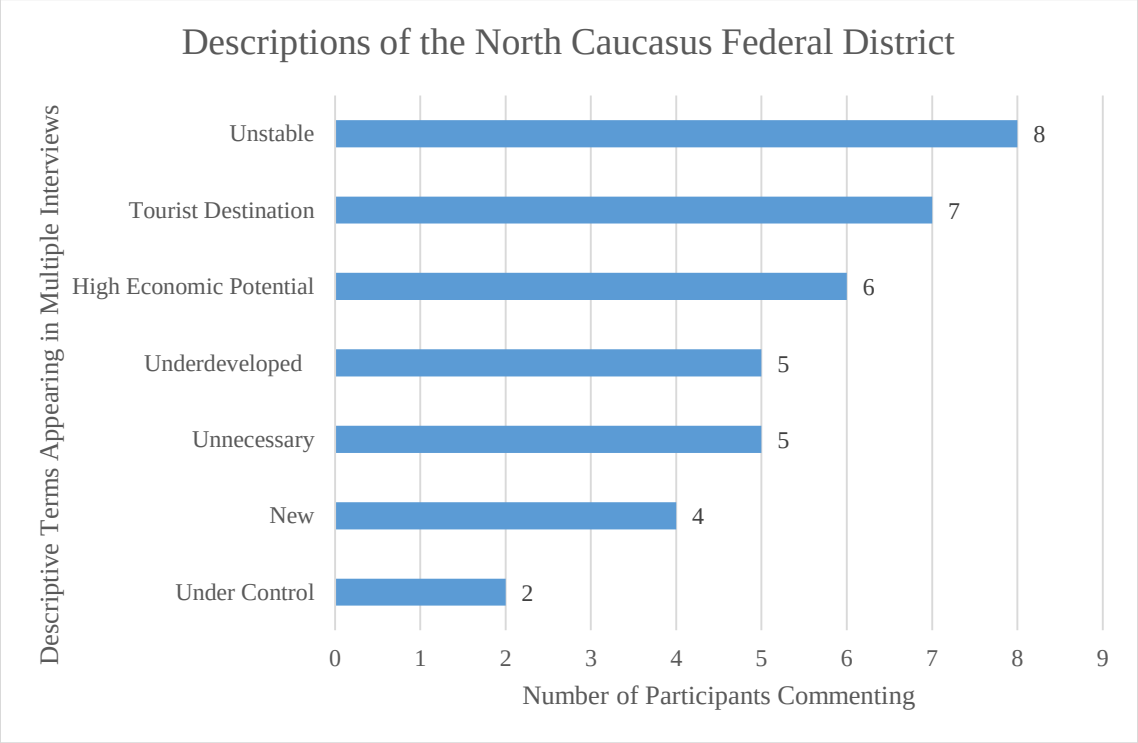

Figure 7.12 – Major Descriptions of the North Caucasus Federal District

The vernacular region "the South of Russia" was discussed by five participants, with five descriptors cited in multiple interviews, again mostly having to do with the region's economic characteristics. Like the North Caucasus and NCFD, participants described the South of Russia as a "tourist destination," and three participants called the region "hospitable." Two participants also described the South of Russia as having a "good climate." Additionally, two participants described the residents of the South of Russia as "lazy," suggesting that people in the region were used to relaxing. Three participants also described the region as "agricultural," a term that was not used in multiple interviews in relation to the North Caucasus or NCFD.

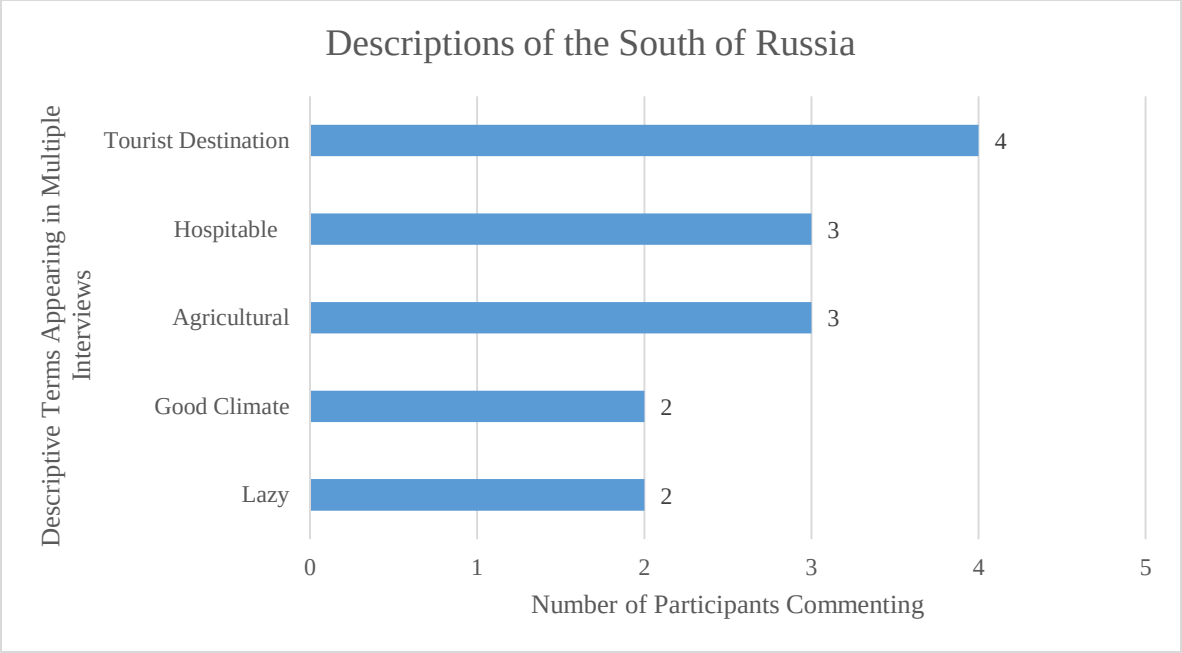

Figure 7.13 – Major Descriptions of the South of Russia

The least commonly discussed region coded for region as brand was the Southern Federal District, about which four participants commented. Since none of the interview participants had been residents of the SFD since the creation of the NCFD in 2010, they mostly referenced the SFD in comparison to other regional constructs. I coded four descriptors that appeared multiple times in relation to the SFD. Three participants described the SFD as "agricultural," and three described it as a "tourist destination," fitting the tendency for participants to discuss regions in an economic sense. However, two additional descriptors appeared for the SFD, which were not present for any of the other region as brand constructs. Two participants described the SFD as "wealthy," and two described it as "Slavic," hinting toward the general idea that the SFD basically retained a majority ethnic Russian population, and a positive economic landscape when the NCFD was established.

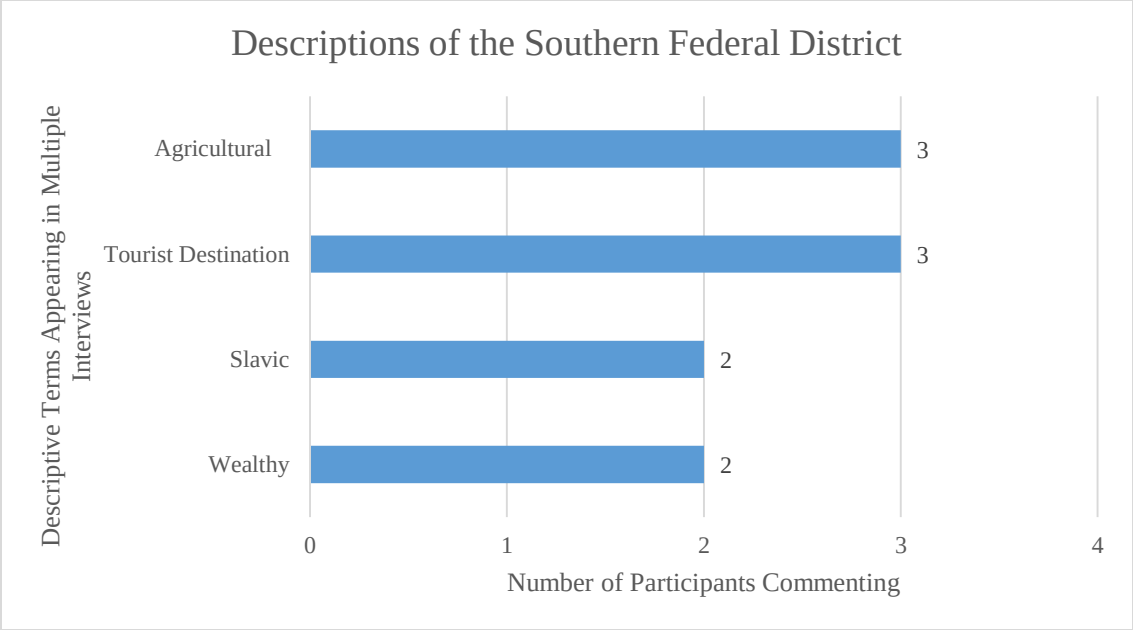

Figure 7.14 – Major Descriptors of the Southern Federal District

Overall, some participants tended to suggest both agreement and disagreement with some aspects of how regions are being branded around the study area. Some of the most discontent came primarily from Russian participants who were uncomfortable with formal separating, via federal districts, of the "South of Russia" and the "North Caucasus." Participant V022 offed the following comment:

> I like the part of Russia that is generally considered the South. I find that I tend to like Southern people better to be around than those in other parts of Russia. Therefore, the fact that I was born in the South of Russia is probably the most important place-based factor for my personal understanding of identity. The North Caucasus is part of the Russian South. I think that the South has a little bit wider scope, it would include places like Krasnodar *Kray*, Rostov, and Astrakhan. The North Caucasus is smaller, but it fits into the South of Russia and is really only considered as different because of the new federal districts. In the South and the North Caucasus, one would encounter similar landscapes, people, and economic activities. The separation between them seems like it was done for administrative reasons, with new capitols and new government.

Doubts in the necessity of a regional brand, as exhibited by Participant V022, suggests that it is necessary for the state to convince the population that its version of the North Caucasus is viable

and correct. This example falls in line with what Felgenhauer (2010) calls "symbolic regionalization," where regional ambiguity is removed through the addition of symbols to regional landscapes, and regions are reified their symbolic meaning becomes routine. The new capitol referred to by participant V022 is Pyatigorsk, which was designated as the capitol of the NCFD in 2010. Another example that points to the desire of the state to symbolically regionalize the NCFD is the renaming of state institutions, such as changing the name of Stavropol State University to North Caucasus State University. Because the state has a monopoly on the branding of its institutions, symbolic changes to the landscape, via rebranding these institutions, constitutes as means by which to educate the population and reify state approved regional understandings.

Construct from Survey Data: Perceived Media Coverage

To code for participants' perceptions of media coverage and themes featuring the study area/its population, namely their opinions regarding their feelings in regard to accuracy of coverage for political and economic processes in the North Caucasus, I analyzed their responses to interview question number 5, as well as any other comments in which participants addressed mass media in the interviews. I asked the participants to determine whether or not coverage was accurate by saying that it was generally mostly accurate, somewhat accurate, or inaccurate. In total 31 participants chose to comment on media coverage of the North Caucasus, and coded passages for this part of the scheme constituted 10.6 percent of the total interviews.

Table 7.12 – Coding Scheme for Perceived Media Coverage

ID #	Percentage	Sentences/Fragments	Perceived Coverage of North Caucasus as mostly accurate/somewhat accurate/inaccurate
V003	7	4/1	Somewhat accurate
V005	2.5	2/0	Somewhat accurate
V006	13.2	5/2	Inaccurate
V007	18.8	1/2	Inaccurate
V008	14.8	2/2	Somewhat accurate
V010	13.6	3/0	Somewhat accurate
V011	10.5	2/0	Somewhat accurate
V013	18.5	3/2	Somewhat accurate
V014	6.9	2/0	Somewhat accurate
V015	16	4/0	Inaccurate
V016	18.8	3/0	Somewhat accurate
V017	22.2	2/2	Somewhat accurate
V019	25	3/3	Somewhat accurate
V020	8	2/0	Mostly accurate
V021	6.5	5/0	Somewhat accurate
V022	14.8	4/4	Inaccurate
V023	9.6	3/2	Somewhat accurate
V024	11.9	5/2	Somewhat accurate
V025	10.2	4/2	Somewhat accurate
V027	6.7	4/0	Somewhat accurate
V028	6.3	4/1	Somewhat accurate
V029	19.2	14/0	Somewhat accurate
V030	6.9	1/2	Somewhat accurate
V031	8.2	4/0	Somewhat accurate
V033	6.7	1/0	Inaccurate
V034	25.7	7/2	Somewhat accurate
V035	11.9	8/0	Somewhat accurate
V036	7	4/0	Somewhat Accurate
V037	10	5/0	Somewhat Accurate
V039	5	2/0	Mostly Accurate
V040	20	3/0	Somewhat Accurate

Most of the participants who voiced their perceptions on the accuracy of media coverage, as it relates to the North Caucasus, said that they believed coverage was somewhat accurate. In

total, 24 participants agreed coverage was not completely reliable. The most popular theme among this group of participants appeared in 16 interviews, which stated that the media coverage available to the population, whether television, print or electronic, was at least somewhat selective with the particular events covered. Of these 16, seven of the participants said that they believed that the media actively hid information when necessary for security reasons, and two described general coverage on the North Caucasus as "hushed," or "cleaned up." Eight participants, who said that media coverage was somewhat accurate, also noted that the North Caucasus was generally presented with negative examples, and that positive coverage was generally rare. Two participants also claimed that they believed the North Caucasus was presented negatively to be shown as an example for other regions of Russia. Finally, two participants noted that accurate information on events in the North Caucasus was always available, but that one had to actively search for such coverage.

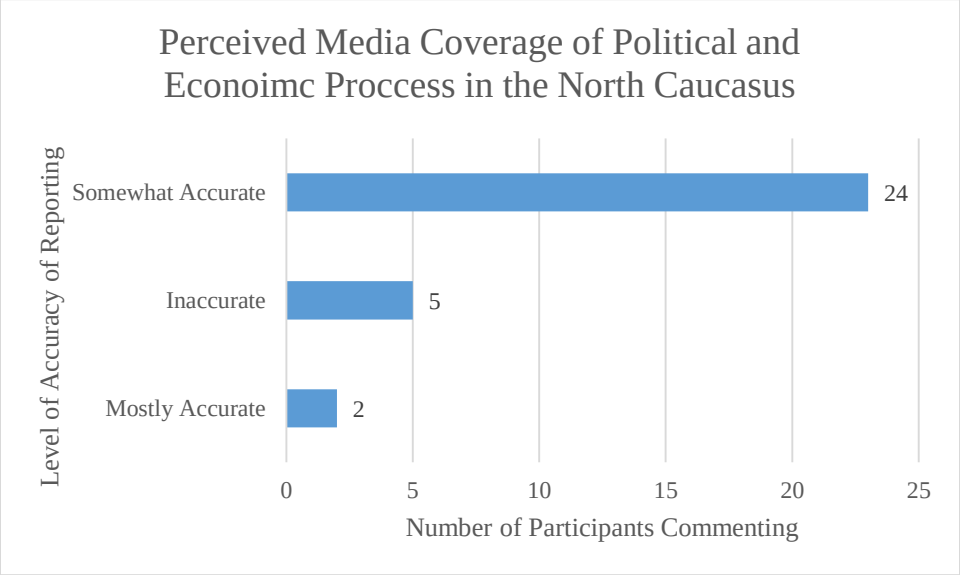

Figure 7.15 – Accuracy Assessment of North Caucasus Media Coverage

Five participants said that they believed media coverage of events and processes in the North Caucasus to be generally inaccurate. Of these five, four of them noted that coverage of the

North Caucasus was often sensationalized, and used to send messages and examples to other parts of the country. Three participants noted that, having spent time outside of the North Caucasus, people in other regions of Russia often viewed the North Caucasus as more dangerous and politically unstable than they noticed it to be through everyday life. Finally, two of the participants who said coverage was inaccurate noted that inaccuracies and omissions of content were necessary to preserve security in the region.

Only two participants said that they believed coverage of economic and political processes and events in the North Caucasus to be mostly accurate. One of these participants said that she considered coverage to be fairly close to what she observed through lived experience, and that in her opinion, the media basically just reports events as they happen, how they happen. The other participant who said coverage was mostly accurate did note that the media could be selective from time to time, but that in most cases, the coverage was fairly in line with the events that occur in the North Caucasus.

Some particularly interesting comments on perceived media content and coverage came from participant V029, a non-Russian man living in Stavropol. His take on the presentation of events and process in the North Caucasus provides insight on many themes of the study, such as ethno-national relations, inter-regional relations and power distributions, and the regional branding of the North Caucasus by the state. According to the participant:

> In my opinion, mass media probably covers about 70 percent of the events that could really matter for the North Caucasus. However, I think there is a lot censorship applied when it comes to how these events are portrayed. This would include official censorship and also self-censorship. Of course, most of the coverage we get on the North Caucasus is negative, but I am actually not against that aspect of the process. I think that a lot of bad things do happen here, and it is necessary to show the rest of Russia what is going on. Citizens in other parts of Russia should be aware of what is going on everywhere in the country. I do want to say though that I feel that non-Russian people, especially from the North Caucasus, are overrepresented when it comes to reporting on crime. I feel as though, despite the fact that non-

> Russians actually commit an overall small proportion of crimes in Russia, the faces that are put on television and shown as criminals tend to non-Russian faces more often than not. This kind of presentation is especially true when events are covered in Moscow. The media makes sure to include the fact that someone is of a North Caucasus national group, if he or she is accused of a crime. If a criminal is of a Slavic nationality, his or her nationality is never emphasized. This kind of discrimination in the media, I think, works to support the idea of a divided Russia and Caucasus. I believe statistics show that 2 or 3 percent of any national group probably has criminal tendencies, but the amount of coverage that is selected to air showing groups from the Caucasus is unfair. There is an anti-North Caucasus agenda and bias in the media.

Drawing on Faucau*l*t (1969) and Hakli (2001), the conception of state produced knowledge and its dissemination though discourse, in this case by the quasi state-operated media in the Russian Federation, it is clear that residents of the North Caucasus, such as participant V029 are aware of discursive themes that couple perceived traits in associated with groups of people and the North Caucasus region. Hakli (2001) suggests that because state-produced knowledge foregrounds some issues and backgrounds others, knowledge regarding the North Caucasus has become very thematic, or "branded," as Vainikka (2012) has termed such processes. The "anti-North Caucasus agenda and bias" mentioned by participant V029 can be seen as purposely constructed, or at least supported, by the state. This set of discursive power relations relates to Faucau*l*t's (1969) notion of meta-power focused on exclusion. By paring the region, and at least some of its population, with negative discursive themes, the North Caucasus can be socially excluded from other parts of Russia's meta-geography, based on the fact that the discourse has framed the region as different (in a negative sense) than the surrounding areas. In a formal sense, we can understand the separation of the North Caucasus from the Southern Federal District as justified socially though this discursive branding of the North Caucasus as negative. While the North Caucasus is discursively excluded, the Southern Federal District can be seen as discursively

included in terms of its place in the order of Russia's meta-geography. The South remains more like the rest of Russia, while the North Caucasus is understood to be different.

The idea of the media shaping opinions on the North Caucasus for the Russia-wide audience and for populations abroad was evident in several interviews. However, the comments made by participant V034 were particularly interesting as he clearly identified several themes and their outcomes in regard to the framing of the North Caucasus region to outsiders. According to participant V034:

> I do not think that people really take mass media at face value. I feel that it is obvious to most people in Russia that the facts and process that are reported are done so under the influence of the people who present them. Mass media is a tool though that can shape regional opinions. In reality, most people in Russia, or outside of Russia, are not going to travel to the North Caucasus personally to see what goes on here. They see explosions and violence from the North Caucasus presented on television. People all over the world see the North Caucasus portrayed as a dangerous region. If someone in America knows anything about the North Caucasus, what is the first description of this regions that comes to mind for them? It is 'danger.' Stavropol gets connected to the narrative of danger because it is territorially connected to the places that get a lot of bad attention, like Chechnya and Dagestan. Even if I invite relatives from up North to visit me in Stavropol, they tell me… "you are crazy for living in the North Caucasus… do you understand how dangerous your region is?" I feel like the "North Caucasus" exists conceptually to present an example of danger. Physically speaking, the mountains do not end in Stavropol, they go all the way to the Black Sea. However, you do not hear about danger when the media mentions the Black Sea. One hears about vacationing and skiing. Tourism is money for all of the Caucasus region, including the North Caucasus. Really, tourism is the only way that this region can make any meaningful money on its own, without aid from the federal center. What I am saying is, coverage of the North Caucasus is selective and opportunistic. Places that are chosen for tourism development are not likely to have negative events covered there.

These comments by participant V034 clearly demonstrate his awareness of state-produced knowledge, and the effects that its dissemination has had opinions of the North Caucasus outside of the region. It is important to note his final comment about "places chosen for tourism," because it highlights how certain areas are selected for omission when it comes to negative information. Competing themes and elements of branding for the North Caucasus are definitely

present in popular discourse on the region, as understood by the participants in this study. Two themes highlighted here, security and tourism, seem to be two major elements in the constructive regionalization process of the North Caucasus.

Construct from Survey Data: Inter-Regional Viewpoint

When coding for passages that pertained to inter-regional view point, particularly participants perceived relationship between the North Caucasus and Russia's Federal Center (Moscow/Federal Government), I isolated any passages containing references to, or comparisons between the North Caucasus and the Federal Center. While coded passages in this section of the scheme came from all portions of the interviews, they were particularly abundant in the answers participants gave to questions 4, 5 and 6. In total, 15 participants commented in regard to their personal views toward the relationship between Moscow and the North Caucasus, with such comments constituting 4.5 percent of the total interview transcript texts.

Table 7.13 – Coding Scheme for Interregional Viewpoint

ID #	Percentage	Sentences/Fragments	Inter-Regional Themes Discussed
V005	4.9	4/0	North Caucasus is a security risk; North Caucasus depends on federal money
V006	5.7	3/0	North Caucasus is a security risk
V014	13.8	4/0	North Caucasus as a security risk
V017	16.7	3/0	North Caucasus as a security risk
V021	3.9	3/0	North Caucasus as a security risk
V022	5.6	3/0	North Caucasus depends on federal money
V023	17.3	7/2	North Caucasus depends on federal money
V024	5.1	3/0	North Caucasus as a security risk
V025	10.2	6/0	North Caucasus depends on federal money
V027	16.7	10/0	North Caucasus depends on federal money
V028	6.1	8/0	North Caucasus is a security risk; North Caucasus depends on federal money

V029	12.3	9/0	North Caucasus depends on federal money; North Caucasus is a security risk
V030	16.3	5/2	North Caucasus depends on federal money
V031	6.1	3/0	North Caucasus depends on federal money
V033	13.3	2/0	North Caucasus used as an example
V036	3.5	2/0	North Caucasus depends on federal money
V037	2	1/0	North Caucasus depends on federal money

Coding for inter-regional viewpoint revealed two major themes, which appeared in multiple interviews. First, 12 of the 15 participants who commented on the relationship between Moscow and the North Caucasus discussed the fact that the North Caucasus received subsidies from Moscow, in the form of money for development and security measures. Participants tended to view this influx of money to the region from the federal center in a variety of ways. The most common sub-theme related to the subsidies had to do with development of the tourism industry. Three participants comment specifically on the federal push to develop tourism is the republics, and especially in Karachay-Cherkessia, and that tourism was really the only viable option. They also commented that since the North Caucasus was considered dangerous to outsiders, that federal money and the promotion of the North Caucasus among Russia's domestic tourist markets was the only viable way forward. Four participants also suggested that federal subsidies were a way to pacify otherwise problematic groups, particularly young people in the republics, who according to participants, would be unemployed should the subsidies and the localized businesses that depend on them cease to come in from Moscow.

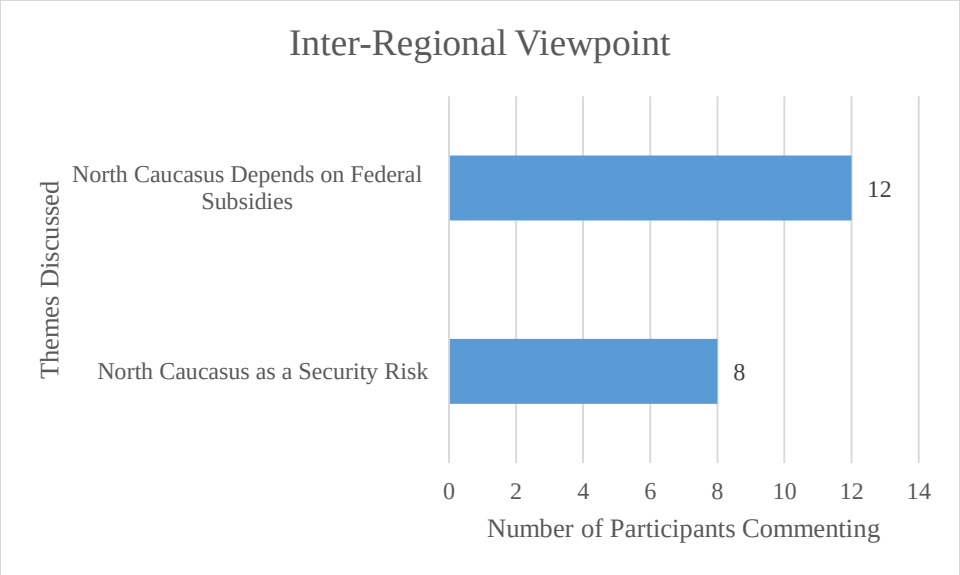

Figure 7.16 – Major Themes Coded According to Interregional Viewpoint

Along with federal subsidies, the other common theme brought up in coding for inter-regional viewpoint was that the Federal Center tended to view the North Caucasus as a security risk. Participants suggested a variety of reasons why Moscow would pay close attention to the North Caucasus. The most common sub-theme dealt with the North Caucasus as a border region, which was pointed out by five participants. They cited examples such as the 2008 conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the Chechen conflicts as events that would justify a strong security presence from the Federal Center in the region. Four participants mentioned that the North Caucasus was potentially susceptible to outside influence, as many of its inhabitants could hold factors like their religion or nationality in higher regard than citizenship in the Russian Federation. Several participants also suggested that the North Caucasus was resource rich, and thus constituted a valuable region for Russia, which Russia should feel it needs to protect.

One area that is particular important for North Caucasus/Federal Center relationship in terms of constructive regionalization is tourism, as it appears to be the North Caucasus's major

avenue for economic development. I found anecdotal evidence in the interviews that would suggest the success of various attempts at regional branding, association with the North Caucasus Federal District and the tourism economy in particular. According to participant V027, who identified herself as an employee working in the tourism sector in Karachay-Cherkessia:

> The relationship between the federal center and the North Caucasus region is vital. In my profession, working in tourism, I believe we would see no development without the financial support from the federal center. As someone who works in the tourism industry, I can tell you that we cannot develop, as an industry in Karachay-Cherkessia, without some type of major outside investment. Politically, I believe that development money has to be brought in collaboratively among the various scales of federal power. The ideas and policies of the Republic, Federal District, and Federal Center have to be aligned. Tourism is an extremely competitive industry, and unless we have beautiful facilities, we cannot hope to compete with other regions of Russia, nor with places outside Russia. I had very high hopes for development in Sochi … that the preparation for the Winter Olympics would also bring development money for the entire North Caucasus region. Most of all, I expected us to get some badly needed improvements with infrastructure, fixing roads, building new roads, and also some attention to a couple of ecological issues we have. So far though, none of these improvements have been made in Karachay-Cherkessia. However, there is still some time, and I really wish that we would see some positive attention. Tourism is really all we have, especially in the cities and villages here in southern Karachay-Cherkessia. Without tourists, we have nothing. I believe that the best time for our industry was when I was very young, still in the Soviet period. Many people came from all over the USSR for their holidays. After the collapse, our industry fell, and in my opinion, has never really recovered. I believe that if we were connected to Sochi by a nice road, one that would allow beach vacationers to come here as part of their holidays, it would really rejuvenate our economy in Karachay-Cherkessia. However, a project like such a road can only be ordered by the federal center.

These comments show that the relationship between the North Caucasus is clearly of critical importance for economic development in the region. However, it also suggests the awareness of an important power relationship. As Participant V027 alludes in her comments, entities at the federal level have the ability to decide how much money and which kinds of resources will be allocated systemically to the North Caucasus. She also points out her belief that tourism is the only viable economic option for her area, further suggesting the North Caucasus's dependence

on the federal center, and thus a perceived de facto lack of regional economic autonomy. Again, the concept of region a brand is evident, as a perceived coupling of the North Caucasus and tourism is clearly present.

Construct from Survey Data: Stavropol *Kray*'s Place in the North Caucasus

The final section of the coding scheme was Stavropol *Kray*'s place in the North Caucasus. To code for this section, I isolated passages whereby participants discussed characteristics of Stavropol *Kray* that identified Stavropol *Kray* as either unique from, or congruent with, other territories in the North Caucasus Federal District. Interview question seven was specifically designed to explore this section of the coding scheme, however, any applicable comments from throughout the interview transcripts were coded for Stavropol *Kray*'s place in the North Caucasus. In total, 37 of the interviews contained comments relating to this section, with 32 of the interviews discussing unique themes for Stavropol *Kray*, eight interviews focusing on congruent themes, and 3 that offered both congruent and unique themes. The total percentage of transcript passages coded for Stavropol's Place in the North Caucasus was 11.8.

Table 7.14 – Coding Scheme for Stavropol's Place in the North Caucasus

ID #	Percentage	Sentences/Fragments	Congruent Themes for Stavropol *Kray* in the North Caucasus Federal District	Unique Themes for Stavropol *Kray* in the North Caucasus Federal District
V003	5.6	4/0		Ethnic Russian territory; Transition Zone
V004	4.4	3/0		Ethnic Russian territory
V005	4.9	4/0		Ethnic Russian territory

V006	11.3	4/2		Ethnic Russian territory; most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V007	18.8	3/0	Similar social mentality	
V008	14.8	4/0	Similar social mentality	Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V009	17.6	3/0		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V010	13.6	3/0	Similar social mentality	Ethnic Russian territory
V011	15.8	3/0		Ethnic Russian territory; Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory; Steppe landscape/unique physical environment
V012	18.2	2/0	Similar quality of life	
V013	14.8	2/2	Similar social mentality; similar quality of life	
V014	17.2	3/2	Similar quality of life	Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V015	16	4/0		Steppe landscape/unique physical environment
V016	12.5	2/0		Ethnic Russian territory
V017	11.1	2/0		Steppe landscape/unique physical environment; Ethnic Russian territory
V018	4.5	1/0		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V019	8.3	2/0		Steppe landscape/unique physical environment; Personable Social Climate
V020	20	3/2	Similar physical environment; similar quality of life; similar social mindset	

V021	14.3	9/2		More developed; transition zone; Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V022	7.4	4/0		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V023	5.8	3/0		Ethnic Russian territory
V024	8.5	5/0		More developed; Ethnic Russian territory
V025	10.2	4/2	Similar physical environment	More developed
V027	8.3	5/0		More developed; Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V028	2.5	2/0		Steppe landscape/unique physical environment
V029	17.8	11/2		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V030	7	3/0		Ethnic Russian territory; More developed; Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V031	12.2	6/0		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V033	20	3/0		Ethnic Russian territory
V034	20	7/0		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V035	1.5	1/0		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V036	10.5	2/4		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory; Steppe landscape/unique physical environment
V037	8	4/0		Most ethnically diverse NCFD territory
V038	7.7	1/0		Ethnic Russian territory
V039	15	4/2		More developed; Personable Social Climate
V040	20	3/0		Ethnic Russian territory

In the interviews that suggested congruent qualities between Stavropol *Kray* and the other territories of the North Caucasus Federal District, three major themes were mentioned by multiple participants. Five participants suggested that the general population of Stavropol *Kray* had a similar social mentality to people in other NCFD territories. Examples for this similar social mentality included, similar manners, approach to social situations, and an overall tendency to work slowly. Next, four participants said that people in Stavropol *Kray* enjoyed a similar quality of life to residents in other NCFD territories, noting similar housing, and access to similar goods and products. Finally, two participants commented on the mountains in Southern Stavropol *Kray* as evidence that the mountainous republics of the NCFD and Stavropol *Kray* share as similar cultural landscape.

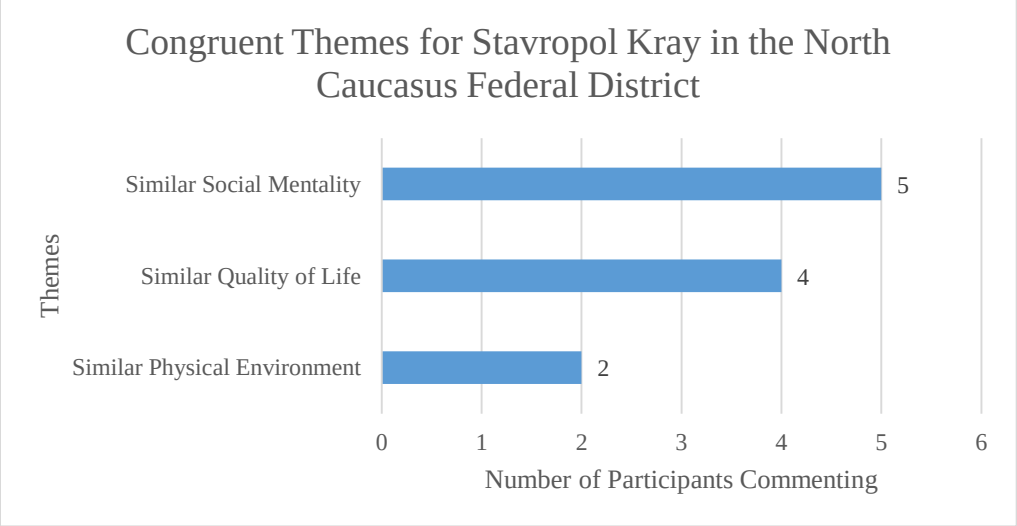

Figure 7.17 – Major Congruent Themes Coded According to Stavropol's Place in the NCFD

Although some participants clearly saw similarities between Stavropol *Kray* and the other NCFD territories, many more cited qualities for Stavropol *Kray* that theyclaimed made it a unique territory in the NCFD. I found six themes that described Stavropol *Kray* as unique, and that appeared in multiple interviews. The most commonly discussed theme was Stavropol *Kray*'s ethnic diversity, which was commented on by 16 participants. The participants noted

that, while the other NCFD territories are also quite diverse, they tend to feature several major groups per territory, with the exception of Dagestan, which has many more. However, due to increased migration patterns in the NCFD, namely non-Russian groups moving to Stavropol *Kray*, one might find representatives from all of the various North Caucasus ethno-national groups in Stavropol *Kray*, making in not only the most diverse NCFD territory, but also the most inclusive. However, 14 participants also noted that Stavropol *Kray* was unique due to the fact that it was the only majority ethnic Russian territory in the NCFD.

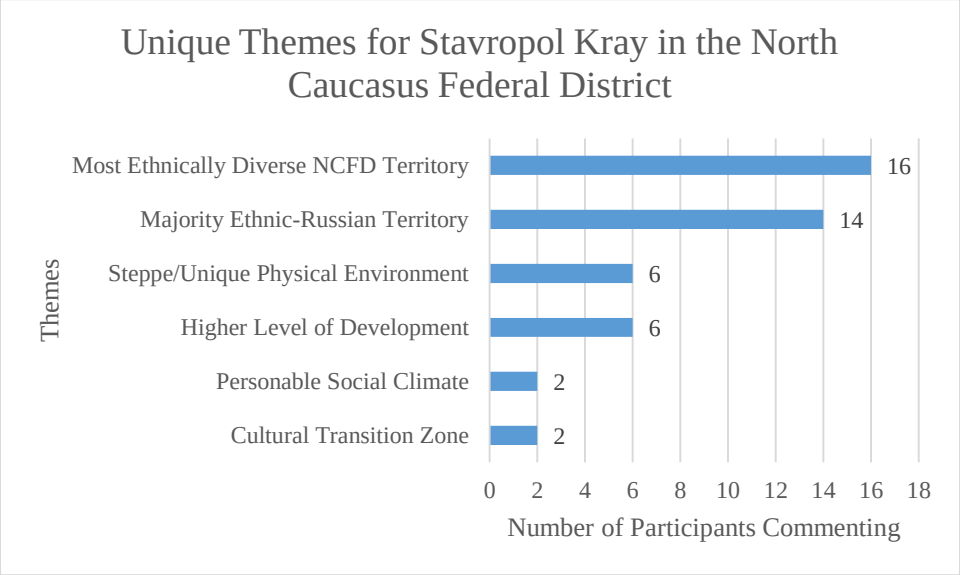

Figure 7.18 – Major Unique Themes Coded According to Stavropol's Place in the NCFD

Six participants commented on Stavropol *Kray*'s steppe landscape as being a unique quality of the territory, compared to the more mountainous landscapes of the NCFD republics. Six participants also noted that Stavropol *Kray*, in their opinion, was more economically developed than the other territories of the NCFD. Finally, two more socio-cultural themes were mentioned by two participants each. One of these themes was the idea that Stavropol *Kray* has a more personable overall social climate, and that one is not as likely to be treated with disrespect, for with bad service in Stavropol *Kray* as one may be in the other NCFD territories. The last

theme had to do with Stavropol *Kray* as a cultural transition zone, referring to the shift from majority ethnic Russian populations to majority non-Russian populations in the republics, and in general from majority Christian populations to majority Muslim populations.

Chapter VIII: Conclusion

In this research project, my aim has been to approach the concept of regional identity in the North Caucasus by focusing on participant data and opinions in regard to the perceived importance of potential markers of regional identity, power relations within Russia's federal structure, and territorial aspects of regional definitions as they are understood by various socio-cultural groups in the North Caucasus. I approached these concepts in order to examine how notions of regional identity are articulated in the contemporary North Caucasus, and whether or not there were significant differences in how these ideas were viewed by the various socio-cultural groups in the region. This project shows some possible points of comparison between the opinions of people in the study area, versus trends derived from empirical census data. I believe the results could be interesting for geographers and other social scientists researching issues of identity in post-Soviet space, as the findings provide a snapshot into participants' views regarding the importance of identity markers in the North Caucasus, along with group-based composite visual representations which illustrate general trends in the territorial salience of identity markers.

In addition, the methodology I developed is potentially useful for researchers who address issues of "identity and place," or "identity and region," because it presents a means by which to gather knowledge from a particular population at a level that is deeper than state statistics, or other broad statistical sources that may be lack an appreciation for territorial nuance. I gathered quantitative and qualitative empirical data from the local population to address four major research questions, focusing on regional definitions and perceived levels of regional cohesiveness, perception and importance of socio-cultural and place-based markers of identity, the roles of ethnic Russian and non-Russian groups in constructing regional perceptions of the

North Caucasus, and the region's perceived role within the meta-geography of the Russian Federation. Through the analysis of surveys, interviews, and a participatory mapping exercise, I was able to uncover many significant differences in the perception of identity markers and constructs among the various ethno-national and religious classification in the region. Participants also offered insights into their understandings of how state policies directed at promoting regional identity through the constructive regionalization of the North Caucasus would potentially impact the study area. Finally, interview data analysis revealed collective trends in regional description, along with the roles and qualities associated with Stavropol *Kray* and the North Caucasus republics, and how North Caucasus regional identity is understood at both the inter-regional and intra-regional scales.

Research Question 1: How do People in the North Caucasus Recognize and Define this Region?

The first major goal of this project is to analyze and assess the extent to which people in the study area recognize the North Caucasus, in terms of its status as a region, and whether or not understandings of regional identity are contested among various subsets of the local population. Understanding how local people view and identify with their environments and living places is beneficial for understanding regional political policy and how regions might or might not be useful territorial devices in promoting state-sponsored agendas for security, economic development, and overall identity building, what I have referred to in this project as constructive regionalization. As suggested by Paasi (2003), power relations, as well as potential rifts caused by contested notions of identity, can be analyzed though examining a population's understanding of *identity of the region,* which is classified by the state, in comparison to said population's *regional consciousness*, which is based on lived experience. Assessing congruence between

regional consciousness and *identity of the region* is important for explaining whether or not a region can perform integrated roles in the greater state, or why a local population may exhibit a lack of trust (Bourdieu, 1998) for the *identity of a region* and therefore resist the state's attempts at constructive regionalization. In the case of the North Caucasus, the state defined *identity of a region* is represented by the formally defined North Caucasus Federal District. Therefore the extent to which participants selected the borders of the NCFD and its territories in their personal opinions, a reflection of their *regional consciousness*, points to whether or not their *regional consciousness* is in agreement with *the identity of a region*.

Findings on Research Question 1a

Research Question 1a states "Do participants have a cohesive understanding of their region territorially, or do different socio-cultural groups disagree on the boundaries and the particular sub-federal territories that should be included in its definition?" To expound on the topic of regional definition, the first question I wanted to explore was whether or not the various socio-cultural groups, mainly ethno-national and religious ones, in the study area agreed on the territorial extents of the North Caucasus Region, as well as the region's composition of sub-federal territories (specific *kray*s and republics). In addition to these socio-cultural variables, I also used participants' self-expressed levels of association with several placed-based identity markers as a point of comparison. The main technique in my methodology that let me approach this question was the participatory mapping exercise (Chapter 4, Table 7.3), specifically Map 2, which asked participants to identify the territorial extents of the North Caucasus region by outlining a template map. Visual comparisons of perceived extents of the North Caucasus were generated via ArcMap 10.3 mashups, while statistical analysis/significance testing regarding

perceived composition of the specific territories of the North Caucasus region was conducted via a Chi-Square test. The independent variable groups tested were Russians versus Non-Russians, Christians versus Muslims, and participants who identified strongly versus weakly with the place-based identity markers "Russian Federation," "North Caucasus Region," and "Federal District."

Based on the visual analysis of the composite maps generated by each independent variable groupthere is evidence that each group generally recognizes the NCFD and its territories as the "North Caucasus," suggesting overall congruence between *identity of a region* and *regional consciousness.* My assertion is based on the fact that in every composite map, the borders of the NCFD are clearly visible, and its territories are selected with a much greater frequency than the territories currently formalized in the Southern Federal District. Although there were definitely some significant differences among the various groups in terms of territorial selection, the overall trend toward territorial selection congruent with the NCFD was present in each case.

While general agreement upon the NCFD as the most common definition of the North Caucasus region is certainly present, there were some statistically significant differences in the North Caucasus's composition of territories which could suggest potential disagreement. The results suggest that religion is an important identity marker for understanding the North Caucasus, as Muslim participants showed a significantly wider composition of territories for the North Caucasus than did Christians, especially for Krasnodar *Kray* and Adygea. Christians were therefore more likely than Muslims to correlate the NCFD with the North Caucasus. The results also showed a significant difference between participants who ranked the "Federal District" highly and those who gave it a low ranking, signifying that strong conceptual association with

the NCFD does correlate with a participant's propensity to view the territorial composition of three region in state-formalized terms. I believe this difference is important because a similar comparison involving the "North Caucasus Region," in a non-formal sense, did not show significant disagreement regarding territorial comparison. Affiliation with the NCFD therefore does seem to be correlated with one's propensity to see this formalized definition as congruent with the North Caucasus region in general.

Again, while the borders of the NCFD appear clearly in every composite map produced, those participants who selected territories outside of the formalized definition tended to indicate Krasnodar *Kray* and Adygea most often. Although this trend was only statistically significant for Muslims versus Christians, the pattern appears to be present in nearly every comparison set. Krasnodar is likely included for several reasons, namely proximity to the NCFD, physical geographic similarities, and economic similarities. The inclusion of Adygea, a majority Muslim republic, within the North Caucasus by Muslims is interesting, as this trend furthers the idea that the idea of the North Caucasus is generally an important identity factor for Muslims living in the study area. This trend is also important because it emphasizes links between territorial and religious senses of identity, which I have argued in previous chapters, can be critical for understanding one's own sense of place and community in the contemporary Russian Federation. Also, the fact this perceived difference in the North Caucasus's territorial composition occurs across religious, rather than ethno-national lines, echoes the sentiment of several interview participants that religion may be a stronger factor of identity for people in the North Caucasus than one's ethno-national identity, in terms of one's own sense of belonging in the North Caucasus specifically.

Findings on Research Question 1b

Research question 1b states "Do participants recognize the North Caucasus as a unique region, fundamentally different than the rest of Russia?" Having found evidence that the formalized definition of the NCFD agrees with most participants' personal conceptions of the North Caucasus and its composition, it is also important to explore how participants view the North Caucasus in terms of its uniqueness as a region, along with their thematic understandings of the North Caucasus, and whether or not they tended to view the region in a generally positive or negative light. To analyze the uniqueness of the region, along with overall participant opinions and feelings regarding the North Caucasus, I relied mostly on the qualitative interview portion of the dataset. Trends in these data did indicate several themes that participants discussed, which fundamentally differentiated the North Caucasus from other regions of Russia.

When coding the interview data for passages dealing with participants' senses of affect or feeling in terms of place-based identity markers, identity markers at the regional scale were mentioned more often than at any other scale (Figure 7.6). Participants were also more negative in regard to regional place-based identity markers than to those at the local, provincial, or federal scales. Looking specifically at the North Caucasus, participants spoke more negatively about the region than about any other place-based marker. The NCFD scored the next most negative responses.

As participants described the North Caucasus Region, the most common theme that set it apart from other regions of Russia, was the North Caucasus's multi-national demographics. Most of the interview participants hinted on this characteristic in one way or another, most pointing out positive aspects of the North Caucasus's multi-ethnic landscape. However, some participants noted their belief that the NCFD was more non-Russian than Russian, and that

migration patterns were trending toward the out migration of ethnic Russians from the region, and the in migration of non-Russians from the NCFD republics into Stavropol *Kray*. Several non-Russian participants also noted this trend. Nonetheless, there was overwhelming agreement among all of the participants that the North Caucasus's ethnic composition is a unique characteristic, which sets the North Caucasus apart from the other regions of the Russian Federation.

Two other negative themes about the North Caucasus that were common among interview participants (Figure 7.11) were the instability of the region, along with its economic underdevelopment. Those who discussed instability tended to do so in relation to either the region's ethno-national population, or its religious diversity. The belief that many groups and their members might have conflicted priorities when it comes to social action, or political allegiance was often expressed. None of the participants mentioned actual threats of violence while speaking on the theme of instability, but rather cited ethno-national affiliations as basis for socio-economic discrimination. Both ethnic Russian and some non-Russian participants expressed the belief that members of non-Russian ethno-national groups tended to favor their own group members when in positions of power, or hiring authority. Participants gave examples from Dagestan and Karachay-Cherkessia. They claimed that ethnic favoritism was often the norm in the republics, and such behavior was likely to make its way into Stavropol *Kray* as more and more non-Russians migrated in, received higher education, and established themselves in Stavropol *Kray*'s power structure. Participants suggested that Krasnodar *Kray,* which had been very similar to Stavropol *Kray* in terms of its geographic, demographic, and economic qualities, was not likely to see this type of ethnic-cronyism take hold, due to the fact that Krasnodar *Kray*

remained in the Southern Federal District, as opposed to the NCFD. This particular type of corruption seemed to be understood as a unique factor of the North Caucasus.

Concerning the North Caucasus's population, themes that appeared also tended to be negative. When compared to perceived qualities in other regions of Russia, participants described people in the North Caucasus as "traditional," as having a "tough mentality," "rude," "ill-tempered," "dissatisfied," and "materialistic." Conversely, when speaking about the South of Russia, participants tended to describe the population as "friendly," "warm," and "hospitable," although possibly also "lazy." Tone and attitude of the conversations also tended to change when participants described the "South of Russia," versus the "North Caucasus." Most of the positive comments regarding the North Caucasus were directed at its economic potential and its natural beauty, as participants noted that they believe the region to be "resource rich" and a good "tourist destination."

Previously, I suggested that in the case of the North Caucasus, if residents of the region can understand the specialized economic role that their region has taken on, and believe that efforts at constructive regionalization will create economic opportunities, they should be motivated to remain in the region as opposed to seeking opportunities outside. Based on interview data, it appears that tourism is the most commonly acknowledged economic strategy that can lead to the region's eventual economic success, other than drawing revenue in the form of aid from the Federal Center. This idea is consistent with general development discourse on the North Caucasus Federal District, namely regarding its status as a special economic zone for touristic development, a policy aimed at attracting foreign direct investment to the NCFD to promote and fund infrastructure and promote regional branding. In light of Russia's current relationship with its traditional tourist markets abroad, namely Turkey and Egypt, combined with

the fact that tourism in Crimea is now considered a domestic market, I believe that the future of the tourism market in the North Caucasus, primarily by domestic tourists, may have a bright future, and merits future research in terms of how this market and its developmental potential impacts North Caucasus regional identity and constructive regionalization.

Findings on Research Question 1c

Research question 1c states: "Do participants recognize specific places (cities) as identity markers, based on association with the North Caucasus?" According to overall survey data results (Figure 4.1), participants tended to associate more strongly with places at the local level, cities/villages/*aul*s, than with any other dependent variable identity makers, except "Russian Federation" and "Native Language." The fact that local scale geographies hold this high degree of importance prompted me to inquire as to which city's participants felt best exemplified the North Caucasus Region. On the surveys, I asked participants to write in the three cities that did so (Table 4.3). The results overwhelmingly favored two cities in particular: Stavropol with 232 selections, and Pyatigorsk with 212. The next 13 most commonly listed cities, which included Grozny, Makhachkala, and Cherkessk, were all located in the North Caucasus Federal District, and tended to be either Republic capitols, or mountain cities in Southern Stavropol *Kray* or the Republics. Krasnodar, with 8 mentions, was the highest ranked among non-NCFD cities.

While there were a few outliers, participants overwhelmingly showed collective agreement that the cities best exemplifying the North Caucasus region were located in the NCFD, and more specifically in Southern Stavropol *Kray* and the Republics. I believe this pattern is important for two main reasons. First, there is a clear association with mountainous terrain and representation of the North Caucasus Region. Even the cities not located in the North Caucasus Federal District that appeared on the list, such as Sochi for example, tended to be

located in close proximity to the Caucasus Mountains. The second important theme in city selection is that cities in Northern Stavropol *Kray* were seldom mentioned in terms of exemplifying the North Caucasus. Such cities, such as Ipatovo, which was mentioned only once, tend to be predominantly agrarian and majority ethnic Russian in their demographics.

Although Stavropol likely is over represented, due to the fact that it was a major data collection site, the city does correlate with the themes of the mountains and ethno-national diversity. As I have suggested in previous chapters, Stavropol's reputation as "Gateway to the Caucasus" can refer not only to is physical location, but as a transition zone between Russian and non-Russian peoples. I believe the fact that it was so commonly listed by participants, along with other cities that meet these two criteria, shows that the local population also sees Stavropol in this way. The fact that Pyatigorsk was ranked second in the list is also significant because Pyatigorsk is the capitol of the North Caucasus Federal District. Based on the fact that many participants pointed out Pyatigorsk's newfound political status in the interviews, it is clear that this city is now clearly important in terms of a North Caucasus *regional consciousness*, which also suggests that the region's population acknowledges the city's political legitimacy.

Research Question 2: How strongly do participants associate with specifically defined territorial (ethno-federal) constructions as identity markers: Russian Federation, Federal District, *Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic?

The ethno-federal structure of Russia is an extremely important factor when approaching issues of territorial identity throughout the Russian Federation, and especially in the North Caucasus. As I discussed in chapters I and II, constructing and administering territories with varying degrees of political autonomy, based on preferential treatment for the titular nationalities in various territories, is an internal geopolitical policy utilized by the Soviet Union which has been carried over into contemporary Russia. Thus, emphasis on territorial status, pegged to

notions of ethno-national identity remains a major markers of identity in Russia, as this study's findings suggest. Russia's ethno-federal structure is complex, and there are many scales that hold place-based markers of identity with which they local population may choose to associate. To address this part of the study, I chose to address participants' perceptions regarding three formalized territorial scales, the federal scale, the federal district scale, and the provincial scale, each of which plays a role in both the ethno-federal system, and in constructive regionalization.

Findings on Research Question 2a

Research question 2a states: "Are there significant differences regarding how strongly various socio-cultural groups associate with the identity markers "Russian Federation," "Federal District," and "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic?" To address this element of the project, I examined both survey data and qualitative interview data, which indicated that there were indeed differences in the levels of association across place-based identity markers by some independent variable groups, and that "Russian Federation," "Federal District" and "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," were actually understood quite differently in terms of affect and feeling by interview participants. The general trend in the data was for participants to associate more strongly with "Russian Federation," then with "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," and finally with "Federal District" (Figure 3.1).

In terms of the coding results for affect and feelings across these identity markers, reactions to the "Russian Federation" were overwhelmingly positive. Stavropol *Kray* was mentioned positively in 73 percent of the coded passages, Karachay-Cherkessia was mentioned favorably in 75 percent of its coded passages, and passages for Dagestan were 50 percent positive and negative. Federal districts were viewed in less positive terms overall. While the Southern Federal District received 67 percent positive comments, only 14 percent of the passages regarding the North Caucasus Federal District were positive (Figure 7.7). When looking deeper

into how the various independent variable groups identified with "Russian Federation," "Federal District," and "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," there were indeed some interesting trends in overall group preference in regard to these three dependent variables. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis analysis indicated significant differences in preference levels for across several independent variable groups in the study, for each of these place-based markers of identity.

In terms of significant differences in preference for the "Russian Federation," participants who indicated that they practiced their national traditions showed significant preference for this federal-scale identity marker, compared to participants who did not actively practice their national traditions (Figure 3.13). This difference was the only one that was significantly different for "Russian Federation," across the various independent variable group categories. Based on the fact that "Russian Federation" was so highly ranked in preference overall, and that there was general agreement across independent variable groups in regard to its importance, and considering with its very positive favorability in the interview data, "Russian Federation" was probably the most important overall identity marker for participants in this project. However, the one significant difference in preference, which suggests a connection to and awareness of the practice of national traditions, suggests that the "Russian Federation," as a marker of identity, plays an even more significant role in the identity constructs of those participants who considered themselves actively involved in cultural practice.

Perceptions of importance regarding "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," showed the most significant differences among independent variable group categories, among the three major identity markers related to ethno-federalism and constructive regionalization. As was the case with "Russian Federation," those participants practicing their national traditions favored "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," significantly over those who did not practice, suggesting that identity

markers at the provincial scale, along with the federal scale, are considered important by participants who felt in touch with the practice of cultural traditions. However, perhaps more interesting were the significantly higher preferences for "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic" by Muslims over Christians, Non-Russians over ethnic Russians, and Native speakers of non-Russian languages over native Russian speakers. These trends clearly show stronger preference for provincial scale identity markers by minority groups. Throughout the previous chapters, I have made mention to ethnic Russians as the "state-bearing nation" in the context of the North Caucasus, meaning that ethnic Russians have perceived political and national legitimacy at all potential scales of territorial identification in Russia, from the Federal scale down through the local. The fact that minority groups significantly prioritize identity markers as the provincial scale suggests the effectiveness of Russia's ethno-federal structure in creating a sense of territorial belonging for non-Russian peoples at the provincial scale. These results suggest that although non-Russians, Muslims, and speakers of non-Russian languages are not necessarily less likely draw on the "Russian Federation" as an identity marker than ethnic Russians, these minority groups' collective results clearly show priority for more localized territorial identity markers in their collective sense of identity.

"Federal District" is the third identity marker that is important for addressing ethno-federalism and identity and constructive regionalization. Unlike "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," only one pair of independent variable group categories differed significantly as to the importance of "Federal District" for identity. I observed this significant difference between Muslims and Christians, with Muslims holding the concept of "Federal Districts" in higher regard than Christians. I believe that it is important to note that religion here played a significant factor, more so than ethno-national groups, further echoing what several interview participants

suggested regarding the dynamics of religion and identity in the North Caucasus region. The argument they made, which seems to agree with the survey data, is that Islam constitutes a more important factor of identity for Muslims in the North Caucasus than these groups' nationalities. Because all of the territories in the North Caucasus Federal District are majority Islamic, with the exceptions of Stavropol *Kray* and North Ossetia-Alania, one could argue that the North Caucasus Federal District constitutes Islamic Space. Significant preference for the "Federal District" by Muslims over Christians clearly shows collective opinion for the outcome of federal district reform in high regard. These results also support that idea that it may actually be more useful to focus on religious identity when studying difference in the contemporary North Caucasus, rather than taking a purely ethno-national focus. Referencing Murdoch (2006), if we understand regional identities to be social constructions and products of discourses, reified through relations with other territories and identities via power dynamics and geopolitical strategies, then we must point out that though constructive regionalization (in the form of Federal District Reform) the Russian Federation has created a tangible identity marker for Muslims with the North Caucasus Federal District, while at the same time separating Islamic populations from the Southern Federal District. The results of this project support the fact that Muslims, as a group, are conscious of "Federal Districts" as markers of identity.

Findings on Research Question 2b

Research questions 2b states "Do participants respect official state territorial guarantees and borders based on titular-status (autonomous ethno-national rights) when associating group salience with territory?" Several data trends and statistical results from throughout the project suggest that the participants were indeed conscious of territorial affiliations and titular status in

North Caucasus region, as well as the perceived intention of the ethno-federal system to create an ethno-national sense of belonging in certain territories as a pursuit toward security and stability. First, the fact that non-Russians significantly preferred provincial level territories as identity constructs, compared to Russians, shows a scalar territorial understanding of belonging. A sense of belonging and collective ownership in provincial level territories, namely republics, is an outcome that seems very much in line with the guarantees included in the constitution of the Russian Federation, and with the attitudes that participants provided in interviews. Second, when looking at the collective composites of Map 1 and Map 4, which asked participants to outline areas where their native languages were spoken and national traditions were practiced, the overall tendency was for members of titular ethno-national groups to concentrate their responses heavily on republics, or areas with presumed autonomous or entitled status.

It is appropriate to view the ethno-federal system as a means by which the Soviet Union and Russian Federation have utilized notions of territory to solve problems (Sack, 1983). I broached the subjects of both Ethno-Federalism and Federal District Reform with interview participants, and based on the coding matrix, determined that the participants were more familiar with the concept of ethno-federalism, along with its perceived outcomes. The empirical evidence I gathered shows that participants are both aware of, and generally respectful of the territorial divisions in question. While general opinion on whether or not such outcomes were generally positive or negative for the study area, 60 percent of the participants who spoke on ethno-federalism did so in negative terms. However, all of the participants were aware of the basic premise of the system, being that certain ethno-national groups are given autonomous or favored status in various sub-federal territories. They also generally agreed that this system had impacted the cultural landscape of the North Caucasus, and that cultural divisions are very

noticeable among the various territories in the North Caucasus Federal District. Therefore, acknowledgement and respect for the system was clearly present via qualitative data. The major criticism of the ethno-federal system in negative interviews tended to relate to inherent social inequalities created via its structure. Again, namely the promotion of ethno-national networks of power, manifested in business and government, which create an advantage for members of a particular group in term of their potential for socio-economic mobility. However, participants who spoke positively about the ethno-federal system tended to praise its use in promoting authentic cultural diversity by creating official environments where non-Russian cultural norms could be accepted and practiced without the perceived social discrimination that non-Russians could encounter in ethnic Russian majority *kray*s or *oblast*s.

Concerning the perceived salience of ethno-national groups with the various sub-federal territories in the study area, perhaps the best evidence in this study of whether or not a group's collective sense of identity is centered can be seen on the ethno-national groups' composite maps concerning perceived use of native language (Map 1; Figure 6.5) and perceived practice of national traditions (Map 4; Figure 6.6). Overall, I observed that for non-Russian groups, and titular groups in particular, territories with official status for these groups were always visually outstanding in the composite maps. For example, Dargins and Lezgins, two groups with official status in Dagestan, both selected a wider scope than just Dagestan, including more area for traditions (Map 4; Figure 6.15) than language (Map 1; Figure 6.14). In fact the responses from these two groups, and each of whom has official status in Dagestan, looks remarkably similar, showing affiliation with Stavropol *Kray* namely. Ingush responses tended to show a similar pattern, with Ingushetia heavily selected, with tighter selection for language than traditions. Karachays were fairly consistent between Maps 1 (Figure 6.11) and 4 (Figure 6.12), but felt

more strongly about language. Nogays, who do not have a single republic in which they claim titular status, did not concentrate their responses in any given territory for either map.

Ethnic Russians showed a clear difference between there perceived salience of language versus cultural traditions. The composites show that ethnic Russians were more comfortable selecting *kray*s and *oblast*s than non-Russian republics, although they still claimed all of the former Soviet territories for language to some degree (Figure 6.20). However, in the ethnic Russian composite map for perceived salience of cultural traditions, there is a very obvious break between *kray*s/*oblast*s and republics (Figure 6.21). The composite maps of ethnic Russians suggest that, as a group, ethnic Russians are collectively aware that *kray*s and *oblast*s are associated with their cultural norms, whereas Russian language, the regional *lingua franca*, is understood to be in use throughout the study area.

While there were clear indications that titular groups claimed territories where they had titular status, there were no cases where the groups selected these territories and nowhere else. The maps generated according to census data tend to be much neater, and focused according to ethno-federal lines. It is clear that an appreciation for and awareness of the guarantees made under the ethno-federal system exists, but the critical commentary and willingness by ethno-national populations suggests that young people in the study area may be looking outside and beyond these traditional territorial divisions as a basis of identity. In the case of non-Russians especially, composite maps showed a much broader perceived reach concerning salience of language and national traditions than the basis census data would otherwise suggest.

Research Question 3: How are issues of civic nationalism and associations with civic and ethnic Russian culture viewed in the North Caucasus?

Ethnic Russians, as the overall most prevalent ethno-national group in the North Caucasus, enjoy a prioritized status for their native language. Russian language has official status throughout the Russian Federation, along with titular non-Russian languages in some republics. Therefore, Russian constitutes the main language of education, and also inter-ethnic communication. Expanding to view the entire Russian Federation, ethnic Russian cultural traits are certainly constitute the dominant form of ethnic expression in the country, and are present to at least some degree throughout the Russian Federation. Ethnic Russian dominance, as I have suggested previously, can be understood through Brubaker's (1995) work on "state-bearing nations." Therefore, since the trappings of the Russian state often correlate with, or in some cases promote, ethnic Russian cultural elements, such as language, religion, and heritage, one might expect that strong associations with Russian citizenship and Russian ethno-national identity are often closely related. However, in this study, my findings suggested that where this is an obvious relationship between these concepts, participants did actually treat ideas of citizenship and ethno-national identity quite differently.

Levels of perceived salience of Russian language throughout the North Caucasus provided interesting insight into the status and importance of its distributions. Ethnic Russians indicated Russian language to be salient everywhere in the study area, and most salient in traditionally ethnic Russian majority territories, the various *kray*s and *oblast*s (Figure 6.20). These results clearly show that ethnic Russians expect to find their language in use throughout the entire study area, and thus may communicate with local populations throughout the entire North Caucasus region. This trend demonstrates the civic importance of the language when compared to the areas in which ethnic Russians indicated ethnic Russian traditions to be salient.

In regard to ethno-national understandings of Russian language, the data showed that the language was recognized as more salient than Russian national traditions in non-Russian republics (Figure 6.21), suggesting that there were some ethnic Russians who made a clear separation between territorial salience of language as opposed to other ethno-national identity markers. Accordingly, participants who strongly associated with the Russian language as an identity marker showed a significant tendency to claim its salience in a greater number of territories in the study area, as compared to participants who claimed a weak association with the language.

Perhaps one of the more interesting trends in the entire dataset was that citizenship in the Russian Federation was more highly prioritized as an overall marker of identity than one's nationality, along with fact that the Russian Federation, as a place-based identity marker, was the overall most highly ranked in the study (Figure 3.1). These trends indicate that participants held federal scale territorial associations and an overall inclusive sense of citizenship to be more important than identity markers that would have indicated identity trends pointing to more nationalist or regionalist leanings. Citizenship was also ranked significantly higher as a marker of identity by participants who did not claim to actively practice their national traditions, when compared to those who said they did practice national traditions (Figure 3.9). This trend is potentially meaningful because it suggests citizenship as a logical basis for identity for people in the North Caucasus who do not choose to engage actively with ethno-national identity, as opposed to other, more exclusive ethno-national markers such as language or religion.

Finally, when comparing how participants qualitatively addressed their attitudes toward "nationality" versus "citizenship," and interesting trend was evident in regard to "social expectations" being discussed in relation to the two concepts. Results from interview data

showed that participants were much more likely to talk about social expectations in relation to "nationality" than to "citizenship" (Figure 7.5). Participants were therefore more concerned with defined definitions pegged to their own ethno-national groups, or to other groups, versus expectations that existed simply according to membership in the Russian state. Such expectations were described as socially important, especially for non-Russians living outside of the Republics in terms of respect for titular populations and cultures, as well as the treatment of people potentially behaving outside of local and accepted sets of social norms. Concern for ethno-national expectations is logical, considering that such expectations are a central tenant of Russia's ethno-federal system.

Findings on Research Question 3a

Research question 3a states "How strongly do people in the North Caucasus associate with socio-cultural identity markers, and are there significant differences in how the various socio-cultural groups in the study are associate with these markers?" The overall preference for association with socio-cultural markers of identity in the study showed "Native Language" as the overall most important maker, followed by "Religion," and "Nationality" respectively (Figure 3.1). In general, participants tended to treat the concepts of native language and religion with minimal disagreement, but showed many different views as to the importance, and overall use of nationality in contemporary Russia. For example, some participants felt that the concept of nationality was important as an institution, because of government statistics, but then claimed that as a marker of identity it has relatively little meaning on one's social status. A common reason for why nationality matters was that political and economic hierarchies are often seen as being structured around ethno-national hierarchies. Participants made this claim especially in the case of the republics, but they often also asserted that ethno-national hierarchies had been

becoming increasingly more important in Stavropol *Kray* since the establishment of the North Caucasus Federal District.

In terms of association with individual socio-cultural identity markers, non-Russians preferred three markers significantly over ethnic Russians. First, "Religion" was ranked at significantly higher by non-Russians when compared to ethnic Russians (Figure 3.2), noting that not all non-Russians in the participant group were of traditionally Muslim nationalities, notably Armenians and other Slavic groups. Since non-Russian groups overwhelmingly tend to belong to churches that fall outside of the Russian Orthodox realm, these communities of believers have the opportunity to ostensibly view their faiths in a minority context, thus logically leading to strong association with religion. It is interesting, however, that association with "Nationality" did not differ significantly among ethnic Russians and non-Russians, as did "Religion." This trend follows some of the sentiments given by interview participants that religion is becoming an increasingly more important means of group identification and association in the North Caucasus, especially among non-Russian communities.

Non-Russians also favored two place-based markers of identity significantly over ethnic Russians: "North Caucasus" (Figure 3.3) and "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic" (Figure 3.4). These two markers of identity are important for non-Russians because they each constitute a context in which ethnic Russian culture can be considered out of place, or possibly outside established sets of cultural norms. The North Caucasus, especially since its rescaling via the establishment of the North Caucasus Federal District, is now officially a non-Russian majority territory. Republics, as previously mentioned, often espouse titular rights and legal frameworks that favor various non-Russian ethno-national groups over others in their sub-federal contexts. It is logical that non-Russian groups would prioritize these two place-based identity markers. However, another

noteworthy trend from the data is that association with the "Russian Federation," the federal-scale marker of place identity, did not differ significantly between ethnic Russians and non-Russians. Therefore, trends from this study suggest that people in the North Caucasus, regardless of ethno-national persuasion, use the "Russian Federation" as a strong marker of identity, but non-Russians also feel strongly about regional and local scale markers, and do so to a significantly higher degree than ethnic Russians.

When comparing preferences of identity markers between Muslims and Christians, data trends indicated that Muslims felt significantly more strongly in favor of association with several markers of identity. Muslim participants ranked "Nationality," "Native Language" and "Religion" significantly higher than Christian participants in the study (Figure 3.21 - Figure 3.23). Muslims also prioritized the following place-based identity markers significantly higher than Christians: "Federal District," "North Caucasus," "South of Russia," and "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic" (Figure 3.24; Figure 3.27). These preferences are perhaps not surprising because in most of the interviews I conducted, religion was a rather important theme. Participants said that one's religion could constitute a necessity for social access among some groups in North Caucasus. Islam was associated with the roles of inclusion and problem solving among Muslim groups, as described as a way that individuals from different traditionally Islamic nationalities could potentially resolve disputes. Orthodox Christianity was discussed in the role of social tolerance and promoting culture.

There were also some noteworthy trends that resulted from analyzing the Map 3 results from Christians and Muslims, by which these two groups indicated their perceptions of territorial salience in regard to their religions. Map 3 results from Christians who ranked "Religion" high in importance tended to more selectively include the study area's *kray*s and *oblast*s, more so than

did the maps from Christians who ranked "Religion" with low importance (Figure 6.48 and Figure 6.49), signifying a greater degree of collective association between religious Russian Orthodox Christians and traditionally ethnic Russian majority territories as salient for their faith. In a similar trend, Muslims who claimed to actively practice Islam were more likely to prioritize the North Caucasus Republics on Map 3 than non-practicing Muslims (Figure 6.54; Figure 6.53), suggesting engagement with an identity marker leads to a more specifically defined territorial perception of its salience.

Another strong trend in the data came from comparing identity marker associations between participants who claimed to be active participants of their national traditions, versus those who claimed not to actively practice. Those who claimed to practice national traditions significantly prioritized "Native Language," "Religion," "Nationality," "Russian Federation," "*Kray*/*Oblast*/Republic," "City/Village/*Aul*" and "South of Russia" over non-practicing participants (Figure 3.10; Figure 3.16). While perhaps not surprising, this trend does again suggest a link between levels of engagement and group consciousness, this time in terms of the practice of national traditions, and the tendency to favor many markers of identity.

Findings on Research Question 3b

Research question 3b states "Is the North Caucasus region perceived to be changing in terms of its Civic Russianness: is it becoming more or less culturally Russian?" The importance of ethno-national diversity in the North Caucasus cannot be understated, as it was a theme that appeared consistently throughout the study. There is little doubt that the demographic changes going on within the North Caucasus Federal District suggest a per-capita decline of its ethnic Russian population, paired by a rise in the overall non-Russian population, in particular Dargins

and other traditionally Muslim nationalities from Stavropol's bordering republics. Stavropol *Kray* was in fact the territory claimed as salient most often by both Christians and Muslims (Figure 6.46; Figure 6.47), suggesting that groups across the socio-cultural spectrum of the North Caucasus see the territory as a comfortable marker of identity.

Interview participants seemed generally aware of the fact that an increasing number of non-Russians are migrating from the republics to Stavropol. The City of Stavropol's official population is 355,066, according to the 2010 All Russia Census and the city is growing while the proportion of ethnic Russians to non-Russians is shrinking. Although, ethnic Russians showed a clear break between majority ethnic Russian *kray*s and *oblast*s and majority non-Russians when mapping their perceptions of where Russian national traditions are territorially salient (Figure 6.21), suggesting that Stavropol *Kray* is clearly perceived to be the most salient place for ethnic Russian culture in the study area. Nonetheless, non-Russians commonly see better economic opportunities in Stavropol and Stavropol *Kray*, and value educational opportunities in Stavropol, and tend to view it generally as a good place to live.

Stavropol *Kray* is also geographically advantageous as a migration destination, as it is located close to republics. Therefore, access and travel back and forth is easy, which tends to be especially important for students. Interview participants also mentioned their knowledge of various non-Russian communities in Stavropol that reflect the ethno-national groups of the republics. Having an established base community in Stavropol is seen as a positive for young people from the republics when they first arrive, and is believed to lead to more migration from rural areas in the republics, where levels of education and knowledge of the Russian language tend to be lower.

Findings on Research Question 3c

Research question 3c states "Do ethnic Russians in the North Caucasus have a regional identity variation of a state-bearing nation?" Although ethnic Russians do constitute a potentially great example of a state-bearing nation, according to Brubaker's (1995) work, the results from this project did not show clear indications that ethnic Russians in the North Caucasus perceived themselves, or their cultural, as state-bearing. I think the best evidence to argue for ethnic Russians as state-bearing is the importance of Russian language. As I mentioned previously, Russian language, as a *lingua franca,* is very important for projecting ethnic Russian cultural hegemony in the North Caucasus. In addition, the data gathered from participants in this study suggest that ethnic Russians do overwhelmingly see their native language as an important marker of identity. Russia, as a nationalizing state, has constructed legal policies and frameworks, such as official language status for Russian language, that encourage an overlap between civic-Russian and ethnic Russian culture. In Russian, this difference is understood a *Russki* (ethnic Russian) versus *Rossiski* (Russian citizenship). A common theme for non-Russians regarding the practice of national traditions involved support of national traditions for the purposes of cultural preservation. As a state-bearing nation, ethnic Russians arguably do not have to be as involved, or as diligent, in performing specific elements of their culture, as ethnic Russian cultural norms and traditions are dominant. Russian language and cultural norms are at least present and expressed via media and state institutions throughout the entire country.

In regard to ethnic Russians' perceived salience of cultural traditions in the study area, responses from ethnic Russians on Map 4 (Figure 6.21) demonstrate that as a group, ethnic Russians showed a conscious perception that their traditions diminish in salience outside of

traditionally ethnic Russian territories (*kray*s and *oblast*s). However, this visible break on the map, which again emphasizes the idea of Russian versus non-Russian space, clearly includes Stavropol *Kray* as a place with a high degree of salience for Russian national traditions. These strong perceptions of ethnic Russian cultural salience in Stavropol *Kray* suggest that ethno-national territorial status may be relevant in forming group perceptions of identity markers in a territorial sense, rather than a purely regional understanding. Therefore, it is clear that ethnic Russians would not likely be comfortable claiming the entire North Caucasus as salient for their ethno-national traditions, with boundaries seemly indicated according to ethno-federal lines between *kray*s and republics. When examining ethnic Russian's composite from Map 2 (Figure 6.26), the consensus group defining of the North Caucasus region included Stavropol *Kray* the collective North Caucasus regional definition, at roughly the same level of selection as republics like Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria (Figure 6.28). Ethnic Russians do understand their group's national traditions to be salient in the North Caucasus, but markedly more salient in Stavropol *Kray* than in the republics.

General understanding of the ethno-federal system in interview data showed that participants understood the purpose of ethno-national autonomous status for republics is to promote non-Russian cultures, and create an environment in which Russian national traditions do not automatically constitute the basis for social norms and understanding, as might be expected of a state-bearing nation. I did not observe a sense that any of the interview participants considered ethnic Russian culture to be expanding into defined non-Russian areas. The perception that non-Russian cultural elements are becoming ever-present in Stavropol *Kray* was very evident however. Non-Russian populations, who have lived according to the break in Russian/non-Russian cultural norms that is reified via ethno-federalism, were generally

perceived by interview participants as lacking desire to adjust to social norms in Stavropol *Kray*, where ethnic Russian culture is supposed to stand as the basis for cultural norms.

Among the interview participants, there was also a sense that ethnic Russians in Stavropol and the rest of the North Caucasus tended to practice unique sets of traditions and conduct their lives differently than ethnic Russians outside the region. According to interview data, a general perception exists that Stavropol Russians have a unique set of traditions, reflecting transculturation between non-Russian cultures from the North Caucasus and Slavic cultural elements. Such an attitude, reflecting notions of transculturation among members of a state-bearing nation, perhaps works in favor of regional understandings of identity showing up as variations in the greater sense of ethnic Russian consciousness. The idea that Stavropol Russians are unique culturally is important because shows a scalar break in identity for the state-bearing nation. Therefore, if the political motivations to include Stavropol *Kray* in the North Caucasus Federal District were to keep the North Caucasus "Russian," one may choose to question the exact understandings of what it means for Stavropol Russians to be Russian, as opposed to being Russians from the North Caucasus. Interview participants who were not originally from the region, or who had migrated out of the area and back again often commented on this same observation, claiming that they noticed a North Caucasus style of behavior and mindset that had more to do with the regional setting than with a particular ethno-national or religious group. This mindset was described as "traditional," "tough," "Ill-tempered," and "materialistic" (Figure 7.11).

Research Question 4: How do people in the North Caucasus view policies aimed at constructive regionalization?

As I have previously discussed, participants in this study were aware of the aims and perceived outcomes of Russia's ethno-federal policies and structure. When considering and discussing the rescaling and formalizing of the North Caucasus region via the establishment of the North Caucasus Federal District, participants were also acutely conscious of the changes and impacts of this policy. First, the overall results from analyzing responses for Map 2, which asked participants to indicate the perceived territorial extents of the North Caucasus region, show a very clear collective awareness of state-formalized borders for the region. Each of the independent variable groups in question (Table 7.3) produced a collective composite that highlighted the borders of the North Caucasus Federal district, and included areas within the set of sub-federal territories of which the NCFD is comprised. While I do not have a basis for comparison regarding how participant would have completed the cognitive mapping exercise before 2010, I believe that such a strong emphasis on the NCFD boundaries, as the most agreed upon definition of the region, would have been unlikely. Regardless of such speculation though, the results of Map 2 clearly demonstrate evidence of an overall understanding of the regions composition and territorial extents, based upon the state's formalization of the NCFD.

Association between the "North Caucasus" and the "North Caucasus Federal District" falls in line with Agnew's (2005) theory on the "classic sovereignty regime," whereby state instructions, which hold a high degree of political authority, distribute information and meaning across more localized scales of power. Therefore I believe it is clear that exposure to definitions of the North Caucasus specifically as the NCFD has had an important on collective understandings of the region.

Findings on Research Question 4a

Research question 4a states How do participants regard ethno-federal governance and the state's efforts to re-scale the North Caucasus, specifically though Federal-District Reform? Viewing perceived importance of place-based markers of identity allows a means by which to gauge the general attitude of participants concerning the popularity and utility of specific territories within Russia's overall meta-geography. For examining rescaling, regional-scale markers of identity that apply to the North Caucasus, both in formal and vernacular senses, are critical in determining whether or not participants accepted, and or valued, state-sponsored formal definitions of the North Caucasus. When considering the overall importance of regional scale markers of identity, "Federal District," a formal marker, received a slightly higher ranking than "The South of Russia," or "The North Caucasus," both of which are vernacular markers (Figure 3.1). This result suggests that the Federal District, as an identity marker, has meaning to participants within the greater meta-geography of the Russian Federation, and that participants were more likely to prioritize formally defined territories, as opposed to vernacular concepts, when considering identity.

The Federal District also has meaning that is reified though the changing status of cities. Several participants expressed disappointment that Pyatigorsk had become the capitol of the NCFD, instead of Stavropol. Additionally, Pyatigorsk was the second most popular choice among participants when they were polled on three cities they believed to be most indicative of North Caucasus culture, finishing ahead of touristic and cultural attractions such as Yessentuki, Caucasian Mineral Waters, Narzan, Dombay and many others (Table 7.3). Changes in the power structure among cities was noticed, and lends credibility to the idea that formalizing the definition of the North Caucasus via the establishment of the NCFD has indeed had an impact on

local definitions of the region itself. Formal separation of the NCFD as the North Caucasus is important because other areas, which the state does not want to be defined as part of the North Caucasus, are therefore protected from this moniker. There was a general sense among participants that the formation of the NCFD resulted in defined regional understanding, in that the South of Russia and the North Caucasus are now separate entities in a formal sense.

Findings on Research Question 4b

Research question 4b states: "Do Participants see Stavropol *Kray* as different from other territories in the North Caucasus, and if so, how?" Since its formation in the late 1700s, both Stavropol and Stavropol *Kray* have played a role in the geopolitics of Russian power and relations among non-Russian lands and peoples in the Caucasus. Therefore, Stavropol *Kray*'s current proximity to other territories, a situation cemented by Soviet territorial policy, has come to have major impact in post-Soviet geopolitical discourse. With its status as the only ethnic Russian majority territory in the North Caucasus Federal District, Stavropol *Kray* continues to play the role as a stronghold of Russian culture and power in the region. To what degree Stavropol *Kray* remains traditionally Russian, as opposed to the North Caucasus, is perhaps the most important element of regional stability for the region, and also a key to success for the overall policy of federal district reform in Russia.

One of my major goals in this project has been to test if and how Stavropol's Caucasus identity is consistent among its local population. To address this issue, I relied on qualitative interview data concerning participants' perceptions on the place of Stavropol *Kray* within the North Caucasus (Table 7.13). In the interviews, participants provided both congruent themes, linking Stavropol *Kray* to the other territories in the North Caucasus Federal District, and unique themes, which suggested major territorial or social cultural differences between Stavropol *Kray*

and the other territories. After coding the interview data, the results indicated that there were arguments for both congruence and uniqueness, however, the tendency for participants to point out differences was much greater than indicating similar themes.

Participants were approximately 4.2 times more likely to focus on unique themes for Stavropol *Kray* in the North Caucasus (Figure 7.18) than on congruent themes (Figure 7.17). The most commonly addressed unique themes dealt with Stavropol *Kray*'s ethno-national characteristics. Participants commonly mentioned that Stavropol *Kray* was the most ethnically diverse territory in the North Caucasus Federal District, and this focus on ethnic-diversity appeared slightly more often than mentioning the territory's ethnic Russian majority. In both of these tendencies, it is clear that participants are aware of the ethnic-differences between Stavropol *Kray* and the other territories. Changing ethno-national dynamics of Stavropol *Kray* were also mentioned, as numbers of non-Russians in Stavropol and Stavropol *Kray* were perceived to be increasing. In the city, a common idea was that young people from the republics could access universities in Stavropol. In Stavropol *Kray*, several participants noted that, particularly in the eastern Stavropol *Kray*, land and houses are viewed as both favorable and accessible for non-Russian migrants, and the overall economic development and conditions in Stavropol *Kray* are viewed as more objective, being less based on ethno-national connections when compared to conditions in the republics (Dagestan and Chechnya in particular). Therefore, the interview data showed an overwhelming sense that the population dynamics of Stavropol *Kray* are changing, mostly due to non-Russians migrating in. These trends were understood as having the effect of diversification in Stavropol *Kray*, which is seen as unique because migration is seen in terms of republic to Stavropol *Kray*, not republic to republic. Stavropol *Kray*'s diversity is increasing when the diversity of the republics are not, which makes Stavropol *Kray*

unique among the NCFD territories because it serves as a transition between majority Russian areas to the north and west, and the majority non-Russian territories of the NCFD.

When participants commented on Stavropol *Kray*'s physical environment and landscape in terms of congruence with the other territories in the NCFD, they were three times more likely to focus on differences. Although some participants did choose to focus on the mountainous areas in southern Stavropol *Kray* as a commonality, most said that the steppe areas in northern Stavropol *Kray* constituted a unique landscape, absent from the other NCFD territories. Steppe characteristics were seen as significant because of the economy in such areas is focused on agriculture, while mountainous areas tended to be associated with tourism. However, again referencing ethno-national differences, steppe areas were described as ethnic Russian dominant, while the population becomes increasingly more ethnically diverse in the cities in southern Stavropol *Kray*, namely in Stavropol itself.

Map 2 results clearly showed Stavropol *Kray* as being selected as part of the North Caucasus region. In addition to being the overall most selected territory to be considered part of the region, it was also the most commonly selected by the majority of the study's independent variable groups more often than any other territory. Visual comparison for all of the composite maps in Chapter 6, relating to the composition of the North Caucasus region, shows that Stavropol *Kray* is clearly understood to be part of the North Caucasus in a collective sense. There is however some variation of selection within the territory itself, although it appears to be quite minor. For example, some participants and independent variable groups, such as Muslims for example (Figure 6.31) were somewhat apt to select areas of Southern Stavropol *Kray* as part of the North Caucasus while omitting the largely majority Russian and steppe environments found in northern Stavropol *Kray*. This trend was visible in all of the composite maps regarding

the North Caucasus region. The trend is also consistent with interview data, as participants who argued that Stavropol *Kray* was different than the other NCFD territories largely pointed to differences in ethno-national demographics and landscape in northern Stavropol *Kray*.

Findings on Research Question 4c

Research Question 4c states "How do participants view the North Caucasus as compared to other regions of Russia, or in terms of its relationship with the Federal Center?" Participants demonstrated a consistent opinion that the North Caucasus tends to be defined in a negative light by other regions of Russia. These perceived negative associations were mostly associated with the North Caucasus as being corrupt or dangerous, and with the region being presented as and overall security risk. Russia-wide media coverage on the North Caucasus was mostly considered to be only somewhat accurate by the research participants (Figure 7.15). Therefore, the general consensus among participants was that there is disproportionate coverage of negative events in the North Caucasus, such as reports on crime, violence, or possibly terrorism, rather than coverage of positive events. The North Caucasus has a role in the regional discourse of Russia, whereby it is presented somewhat as an 'other.' The region constitutes a problem, or set of problems, which can be fixed with a top down approach, consistent with the ideas of vertical power and federal district reform.

Interview data revealed two major themes in regard to the relationship between the North Caucasus and the Federal Center (Figure 7.16). The general agreement is that the North Caucasus region depends on federal subsidies for economic development, along with the idea that the North Caucasus region is understood as socially unstable and as a security risk. In terms of political and economic media coverage, participants tended to expect that some events would be omitted from broadcasts, or held back due to security reasons. Participants were also in

general agreement that the North Caucasus region is presented as dangerous and problematic in the media. The interview participants that had spent time outside of the North Caucasus, namely in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, noted that telling people they were from the North Caucasus promoted curiosity about safety and security. Non-Russian ethnic groups were also understood as being presented as a security risk. This idea was particularly emphasized by interviews with non-Russian participants.

Concluding Remarks and Potential Impacts

The Russian state's policies of constructive regionalization clearly demonstrate the desire to formalize understandings of the North Caucasus region, and by doing so support order in the region that can be maintained and managed. Data analysis from this project also suggests that participants in the North Caucasus are aware of goals and desired outcomes of the constructive regionalization process, and are conscious of the discursive role that the North Caucasus plays in Russia's meta-geography. The belief in various unique aspects of the North Caucasus, such as ethno-national diversity, perceived geopolitical instability, and a path to economic development that depends on attention and support from the federal center were expressed very clearly by the participants in this study.

The idea that the North Caucasus should be considered a zone of transition between both ethnic Russian and non-Russian cultures, as well as between Russian Orthodox Christian and Islamic space, was also a major factor in how participants understood the North Caucasus. After spending time in the North Caucasus, as well as in several territories in the Southern Federal District and Central Federal district, I believe that participants' suggestions regarding a way of life in the North Caucasus that is unlike traditional ethnic Russian territories were accurate. It is

clear though that participants from all sub-groups in the region acknowledged that diversity was perhaps the main overall cultural trait of the North Caucasus, and that association with the Russian Federation, as well as with regional scale identity markers, was important for understanding the North Caucasus.

Finally, the policies of federal district reform and ethno-federalism have had, and will no doubt continue to have, impacts on future demographic trends in the region, as Stavropol *Kray* continues to receive migrants from the other North Caucasus Federal District republics, and as young people from all over the North Caucasus Federal District leave the region in search of better economic opportunities, particularly those in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Rostov-on-Don and Krasnodar. From a development standpoint, the sentiment was clear that Stavropol *Kray*'s future is with the other North Caucasus Federal District territories in terms of federal attention, rather than with traditionally ethnic Russian majority territories that remained in the Southern Federal District. The development of the region on the whole is widely believed to depend on the political will from the federal center, and federal subsidies coming to the North Caucasus. Whatever the future holds for the North Caucasus, this region plays an important role in the meta-geography of Russia and remains an important marker of identity for the people living in this extremely diverse region. Within the region itself, territorial constructs rank highly among the major markers of identity. Just as they were in Soviet times, defined markers of identity remain important for the North Caucasus population to make sense of its place within Russia, and to navigate the complex landscape in this extremely diverse and fascinating region.

Looking beyond this project, research techniques such as those used in this study are important because they present the opportunity to illuminate cultural, social, economic, or political nuances that are potentially run contrary to official statistics or state-produced

discourses. As noted by the works of Foucault (1991) and Hakli (2001), states have a monopoly on official statistics and how they are represented. These sets of statistics in turn can be used to produce discursive representations, employed vis-à-vis geopolitical discourse to advance state agendas (Ó Tuathail, 2006). In the case of the North Caucasus, the state has the power to define and represent the region, which I have argued has been done to promote various discourses on security, ethnic relations, and economic development, all of which have an impact on populations both within and outside of the North Caucasus region. The methodology I have conducted, along with the results of this project, show nuanced spatial opinions of the local population in regard to the composition and territorial extents of the North Caucasus. Therefore, I believe it constitutes one technique by which to test the effectiveness of geopolitical discourses in terms of regional definition. For example, referring back to Figures 4.30 through 4.33, the results suggest that Christian populations are significantly more apt to accept the state-produced definition of the region, the boundaries of the North Caucasus Federal District as compared to Muslims in the study area. In cases such as this one, identifying rifts in opinion may be useful to a number of actors, who may choose to consider changes in policy, outreach, or discursive representation depending on how they might evaluate the importance of the rift.

Individual and group perception is important because people make decisions based on that which they believe to be true. Because these beliefs may run contrary to official statistics, knowing what local populations actually perceive to be true is arguably important for understanding their behavioral outcomes. Migration decisions could be facilitated via the belief that a destination is friendly, or beneficial to one's cultural, ethnic, or religious group, such was the case with the maps and interview data provided by Dargin participants, and several other groups, who perceived their ethnicity to be salient in a much wider territorial scope than Russian

census data would suggest. Geographers who study migration may choose to utilize the techniques in this study to evaluate potential migration destinations among potential migrant groups, in order to identify patterns their overall understandings of their desired destinations in terms of a number of variables based on cultural transition, safety and security, economic potential and so on.

Gaining knowledge from local populations may uncover identity differences within groups that were previously thought to be cohesive, thus gaining insight into intra-group variations of opinions. For example, activists in the broader Armenian community could be interested in the omission of Nagorno-Karabakh, in terms its being a place where Armenian ethnic traits are salient, by most of the Armenian participants in this study. Such information may be of use to political and electoral geographers, particularly those working in contexts of democracies, in comparing and contrasting the importance of political issues within a particular voting bloc, in terms of where said issues are perceived to be placed. Identifying rifts within an established group may cause researchers to consider rescaling or questioning the validity of group in question in regard to its cohesion. Such information could also impact the policies of state officials and grassroots activists in terms of policy, outreach, and dissemination of information.

Empirical research, such as that which I have conducted in this study, provides a glimpse in time, which has the potential to serve as a point of comparison for future work. In regions where political geographies are dynamic, understanding where certain traits, populations, and or beliefs exist in a territorial sense may prove to be useful in understanding changes in the map. For example, the study map used for the template in this project, which was accurate for 2013, would arguably need to be revised for a repeated study in 2016, after Russia's annexation of

Crimea from Ukraine. An example for future research might be to compare ethnic Russians' territorial perceptions of Crimea on an updated map, which would label the peninsula as part of the Russian Federation.

On an ending note, I feel that using the techniques presented in this project provide a chance for validation in territorial problem solving. The main theme is local belief in comparison with official statistics. Any research problem that deals with a social variable or identity marker in territorial context may potentially have something to gain from gathering local opinions via variable preference, cognitive mapping, and qualitative analysis. From a security perspective, the techniques demonstrated in this project could be applied in terms of identifying territory where a certain population feels safe, or under threat. From an economic perspective, the methodology could be applied to analyze where people perceive services to be available, or goods to be accessible. From a political perceptive, it could be applied to test the territorial salience of variables related to voting and governance. It is my hope that other geographers and social scientists will be able to use this project, its findings, and the methods I have conducted, to further understandings of regional identity, as well as how they might choose to approach spatial analysis.

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Appendix A: Sample Survey

V019

Будьте добры, дайте ответы на вопросы представленные ниже (все или по -Вашему выбору). Предоставленные Вами данные необходимы для проведения исследования в области региональной географии и последующего написания докторской диссертации. Спасибо за Вашу помощь.

Ваша национальность Русский
Соблюдаете ли Вы культурные традиции, присущие Вашей национальности? Да Нет
Относятся ли Ваши родители к единой этно-национальной группе? Да Нет
Ваше место рождения Читинская обл. Каларский р-н. п. Новая-Чара
Являетесь ли Вы представителем первого поколения в своей семье, рожденным в данном месте? Да Нет
Выросли ли Вы в месте отличном от того, где родились? Да Нет Если да, то где? Став. кр. ст. Курская
Ваше место проживания г. Ставрополь
Как долго Вы проживаете в данном населенном пункте? 3 года
Ваш возраст 21
Пол мужской
Родной язык русский
Является ли Ваш родной язык основным для коммуникации? Да Нет
Ваша религия Православие
Участвуете ли Вы в религиозных обрядах регулярно? Да Нет

Оцените по шкале от 1 до 5 (1 «совсем неважно», 3 «в определенных случаях», 5 «очень важно») в какой мере для Вас важны следующие факторы:

Национальность	1 2 3 (4) 5
Религия	(1) 2 3 4 5
Родной язык	1 2 3 (4) 5
Гражданство Российской Федерации	(1) 2 3 4 5

Насколько сильно Вы идентифицируете свою территориальную принадлежность?

Российская Федерация	1 2 3 (4) 5
Ваш федеральный округ	1 2 3 (4) 5
Юг России	1 2 3 (4) 5
Северный Кавказ	1 2 3 (4) 5
Ваш край/область/республика	1 2 3 (4) 5
Ваш город/село/аул	1 2 3 (4) 5

Назовите три города, которые, по – Вашему мнению, наиболее ярко отражают традиции Северного Кавказа
Ставрополь, Пятигорск, Мин-Воды.

Используя шкалу от 1 до 5 оцените, насколько важно для федерального центра развитие Северного Кавказа? 1 2 3 (4) 5

Насколько важно отношение федерального центра к региону? 1 2 3 4 (5)